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S O C R A T E S,

A

D R A M A T I C

P O E M,

BY

AMYAS BUSHE, ESQ. A.M.

FELLOW OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY.

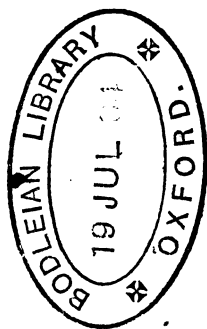
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TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
GEORGE LORD LYTTLETON,
BARON OF FRANKLY.

MY LORD,

SOCRATES through many ages has been kindly received by all persons of virtue, learning, and taste; your Lordship has already paid him particular marks of your regard in his present character and dress; your approbation of this dramatic poem, is my strongest encouragement to offer it to the public; mere amusement, and to fill up an interval of leisure and solitude, were, I confess, my first inducements to attempt this performance; I could not then think of making it public, tho' some few friends of learning and judgment gave me their favourable opinion of it; but altho' this somewhat gratified my vanity, yet it was not a sufficient motive to induce me to a publication, without applying to, and soliciting your Lordship to peruse it, being well assured, that if you thought it tolerable, I had not much to dread from any reader of candour and ingenuity: I was ambitious of so high a sanction, and I am happy in the enjoyment of it---But your Lordship's further indulgence to Socrates, in pointing at, and proscribing several inaccuracies, redundancies, and other infirmities of the work, and above all, in taking him under your protection, at a time when learning and virtue meet with such cold hospitality from the world, has in a great degree grafted this poem on the rich stock of your own high reputa-

DEDICATION,

tion; as a scyon that may draw from the fostering influence of your fame, no small nourishment and support; your laurels will, (contrary to the qualities of most others) not only insure immortality and vigour to themselves, but preserve life and verdure to any tender sprigs which they vouchsafe to shelter. Give me leave, my Lord, to return you my sincere thanks for the favour you do me, in permitting this dedication of Socrates to you; it will be the greatest literary honour to my name, to be seen in company with your's by latest posterity: your's, my Lord, can die but with the English language, and some of its truest honours and ornaments exemplified in all your poetic works, and with the Christian religion, so nobly supported by you in your argument on the conversion of St. Paul: as to my own, I have as yet no insurance against its mortality, except your kind opinion and protection of this little work, calculated you know for the closet, and not for the stage. Whatever its merit or demerit may be, it will have a fairer and more dispassionate trial, than most pieces exhibited can expect to meet with. I shall trespass upon your patience, by once more recommending this tender, and first-published offspring of my fancy, to your friendly adoption and patronage, and to assure you, that I am, my Lord, with the greatest esteem and respect,

Your Lordship's most obliged

and most obedient humble Servant,

AMYAS BUSHE.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE system and sentiments employed in the following poem, whether moral or metaphysical, are no farther embraced by the author, nor recommended to the reader, than as they agree with sound morality and Christian principles: they are considered as the nearest approaches made by uninspired reason, to that perfect dispensation, which the gospel affords to mankind. The name of Socrates will in some measure sanctify the doctrine he delivers; his catastrophe will be a signal and illustrious instance, both of the depravity and excellence of human nature. It is with the view to introduce the knowledge of this wonderful man, and his system, to those, whose want of leisure, and different pursuits, have prevented them from studying the dead languages, that he comes abroad in this dress, to entertain (we hope) and instruct the reader, to whose candour and favour we venture to submit him.

TO
AMYAS BUSHE, Esq.

ON HIS
DRAMATIC POEM ON THE DEATH
OF SOCRATES.

BY AN UNKNOWN HAND.

THE half-evangeliz'd, inspired store
Of sacred Socrates---his heaven-taught lore
Informs with dignity divine your lays ;
There Pagan truths with Christian fervor blaze,
The gospel's harbinger, who shone so bright,
With more than ethic rays, than nature's light
His lamp was rais'd---with more than mortal flame
His soul was fir'd, from heaven its lustre came ;
From thence his meekness sprung, his stedfast mind,
Which throws all vain philosophy behind ;
All technic arrogance, all stoic pride,
And false presumption, ever wand'ring wide
From virtue's genuine path, whose wisdom trod
The path of purity, the way to God.
There Socrates a human saviour went,
And taught mankind to tremble and repent ;
There shone the hallow'd sage---in your strong lines
Intrinsic energy, and greatness shines :

TO AMYAS BUSHE, ESQ.

Here strength of soul, the man divine appears,
By rigid power oppress'd, oppress'd by years,
By deadly rancour smote, by fraud pursu'd,
See rancour, fraud, by Socrates subdu'd;
His virtue conquers all, all rage defies,
His virtue triumphs, triumphs as he dies;
O glorious task ! mere mortal man to try,
Could unassisted nature climb so high !
Your hand each sentiment sublime could trace
With native strength, simplicity and grace ;
Your well-directed thought the pile could plan,
And raise once more to view the godlike man,
Erect, admir'd, as when all Athens wept,
And widow'd Virtue mournful vigils kept ;
Your hand can fill, and strike the soul with awe,
And Socrates with equal virtue draw.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE.

SOCRATES.

HERMOGENES.

CHORUS.

ARISTODEMUS.

CHORUS of ETHERIAL SPIRITS.

PRESIDENT.

JUDGES.

MELITUS.

OFFICER of Court.

CRITO.

PHAEDO.

CEBES.

GOALER.

SCENE, Athens.

S O C R A T E S,

A

D R A M A T I C

P O E M.

A C T I. S C E N E I.

S C E N E, S O C R A T E S ' s h o u s e.

S O C R A T E S s o l u s.

MY shield, my breast-plate, virtue has put on,
Let envy's hostile darts assault in vain
This firm-collected soul, I feel that strength,
That fortitude serene, which honesty
Alone can give the mind, that never lodg'd
Presumption vain, hypocrisy, nor pride
Within its secret cells; nor public fraud,
Nor ostentation vile, nor sensual views
Abhorr'd, nor impious thoughts against the gods--
Integrity! thou citadel secure,
Thou bulwark of the soul--invincible!
Intrench my heart around with conscious strength,
Becoming dignity, and just disdain
Of imputations foul, and horrid crimes:

A

I feel an inspiration from above
 Invig'rate, and sublime my inward frame,
 And *raise* my spirits up---there is---there is---
 Socrates shall live for ever---I feel
 An active and immortal principle;
 I shall be justified above the stars
 Among the blest'd, at Heaven's great tribunal,
 O energy divine! I feel the God
 Inspiring comfort.

Enter HERMOGENES.

HERMOGENES.

Hail! great holy sage
 Of aspect venerable, tho' the trace
 Of wasteful years and foul-employing thought
 Sit furrow'd on thy brow! if disengag'd
 From private cares, let now the rosy morn
 Invite thy steps abroad to yonder shades,
 Where oft thy moral doctrines clear'd some truth,
 Some heavenly truth, and check'd the stream
 Of a licentious age; go forth once more
 In thy integrity, let wisdom's force
 Direct and bless mankind.

SOCRATES.

Hail, worthy friend!
 For ever present to my inmost thoughts
 When best-employ'd, come, sit thee down a while;
 Thy visit is well tim'd---just as thou enter'd,

S O C R A T E S.

3

My soul was full intent on virtue's charms
In beauty's form array'd; for, O she shines
As do aerial shapes that bring to men
Some high behests from heav'n, and on my mind
Beams radiant light, such as pure spirits feel
When disengag'd from earth they wing their way
To happy mansions.

HERMOGENES.

Noble are the thoughts
Which thus employ thy mind; oppress'd by ills
And injur'd by thy thankless countrymen;
Ungrateful Athens---ages yet to come---
But thy exalted mind with pity looks
On those confederates; you feel for them
A father's anger when they most offend.
Fain would I view those truths by thee display'd
In all their native charms, from thy clear mind
Truths flow like oracles.

SOCRATES.

'Tis wisdom's task

To rise against misrule's oppressive power,
And conquer calumny with virtue's force;
Th' Athenians yet may feel, perhaps confess
That Socrates deserv'd a better fate;
But heaven's decrees must over all prevail,
And innocence must learn to suffer wrongs---
Know, beauty is a pure ethereal ray
Of fair celestial make, that issues forth.

A 3

From the sole fount of light, and lustre spreads
 Thro' air, and earth, and heaven : old ocean feels
 The influence of its beam : when tempests fly
 They bear it on their wings : the firmament
 Radiant with starry orbs, light above light
 In lucid order rais'd, aloud proclaims
 The fair original---

HERMOGENES.

The works of God

Indeed are great, and shew a wond'rous hand
 Which gave them thus to shine ; but still remains
 What I most long to know, how virtue wears
 Fair beauty's form, and as you seem'd to hint
 Differs but in the name.

SOCRATES.

Beauties that shine

In the material world, are certain laws
 Impress'd on natural things, by the great God
 Of nature, furnish'd with peculiar powers
 To actuate their being, by which they move
 To their respective ends ; nor do they want
 A higher rule, as they can never swerve
 From what is beautiful : but man is rais'd
 High in the scale of beings, and inform'd
 With intellectual faculties that shew
 The beauty of the mind, by which he claims
 Relation to his Maker, and partakes
 Of rectitude divine : hence, moral acts

Which flow from reason, and obsequious will,
 Are beautiful and good, because with God
 Similitude they hold, whose sacred will,
 Pure as his essence, never can divert
 From what is right, and is itself the law
 Which we call nat'ral, as he, only, rules
 As well the moral as material world.

HERMOGENES.

Great are thy sentiments, thou sage divine,
 And rest on principles that bear the test
 And scrutiny of reason. He who form'd
 The sum of things, to every part assign'd
 Beauty and order, suited to the kinds
 Of their respective natures, as a law
 To rule their actions; but on man he stamp'd
 An image of himself, by which he moves
 To moral ends by intellectual means. [Ex. HER.

HYMN to BEAUTY and VIRTUE.

Semichorus 1.

Hail sacred source of heav'n and earth!
 From thee fair Beauty takes her birth:
 Whate'er in prospect charms the eye,
 From thee receives its pleasing dye:
 From thee, Apollo gilds the ray
 That ushers in the new-born day:
 From thee, the moon with borrow'd light
 Supplies the silver lamp of night:

From thee, fair Iris paints her bow
 Where all thy varied colours glow :
 Form'd by thy hand, does nature spread
 A flow'ry carpet o'er the mead :
 From thee the face of earth is seen
 Array'd in chearful robes of green :
 What blossoms on the fragrant tree
 Derives th' impatient buds from thee :
 What sparkles in the diamond shows
 The brighter fount from which it flows :
 All that can please in earth or air
 Is but of thee a copy fair :
 Thy beauty fills the world with light,
 Which, without thee, would sink in night,

Semichorus 2.

But Beauty, in the moral way,
 Shines with a brighter purer ray !
 Distinct the living lines appear ;
 The colours strong, the image clear,
 Not fairer seen, nor yet more like
 The objects from the mirror strike :
 There, fortitude and prudence shine,
 Beaming with radiance divine :
 Here awful justice holds her scales,
 Her pure decrees impartial deals :
 There the firm patriot pleads the cause
 Of merit, rais'd on Virtue's laws ;

S O C R A T E S.

7

And here, th' immoral villain bleeds,
Unpitied, for nefarious deeds.

Chorus,

Beauty and Virtue are the same;
They differ, only in the name.
What to the soul is pure and bright
Is Beauty in a moral light;
And what to sense does charms convey
Is Beauty in the nat'ral way:
Each from one source its essence draws,
And both conform to nature's laws,

S C E N E II.

S O C R A T E S solus.

It cannot be---for since this beauteous world
Was rais'd by God, his Providence must rule
The vast machine---Chance is an idle toy
For fools to play with---Should fixt nature change
Her well-known course, and vary from the laws
That guide the system: should the elements,
Whereof all things in this our lower world
Are form'd, desert the station which they hold,
In concert with the whole: should the great frame
Of that bright heavenly arch, which o'er our heads
Shines with refulgent light, give way, and feel
A dissolution: should celestial spheres

Forget their wonted course, and devious turn
 As chance misguides : should the bright lamp of heaven
 Withdraw his light, and the pale wand'ring moon
 Mistake her well-known path : should seasons mix
 In wild confusion, or expiring winds
 Breathe their last gasp : should earth's fair fruitage droop
 Like children on the wither'd breasts that fail
 Of proper food : should chance or fortune reign
 With arbitrary sway : what would become
 Of man himself, for whom these things are made ?
 Idle surmise ! There is a living God
 Who rules supreme, under whose brooding wing
 All nature rests secure.

Enter ARISTODEMUS.

SOCRATES.

Welcome my friend !

I hope, Aristodemus, no new doubts
 Concerning God and Providence, disturb
 The quiet of thy mind.

ARISTODEMUS.

Till clearer thoughts
 Have calm'd the tumult of a working soul,
 It cannot rest, but like a rolling ship
 Tost on tempestuous waves, resigns the helm
 That should direct its course, and feels the force
 Of rising doubts, which like fierce-warring winds
 From divers quarters, agitate the soul

S O C R A T E S.

9

With anxious thoughts that violate the peace
And quiet of the mind---O Socrates !
That thinking principle I feel within me
Is ever on the rack.

SOCRATES.

Come, let us view

Once more the matter in fair points of light,
And then let reason judge. Can'st thou perceive
How causes operate ? what latent springs [hail,
Move nature's works ? know'st thou, what rounds the
Or points the flaming dart ? how the hoar frost
Is form'd of pearly dew ? how icy chains
Restrain the fluid mass, and stay the course
Of limpid streams, that wont to glide along
In liquid lapse ? or, grant that you could view
Nature's recess, and see the hidden wheels
By which things move, and operate with ease ;
Are they at thy disposal ? canst thou wing
The feather'd snow ? or bid the brushing winds
Sweep the aerial way ? canst thou dispose
Of seasons and their change ? do elements
Of jarring atoms form'd, at thy command
In friendly league combine ? or day and night
Alternate reign ? And yet all nature moves
By certain laws that rule the vast machine
In each degree of change, and speak a power
That gives it motion, and directs the parts
To their respective ends ; for things inert

Could never act, without a living soul
 To give them energy : were it not so,
 The orbs of heav'n would cease to roll, the air
 Forget to breathe, and earth refuse to yield
 Her various fruits.

ARISTODEMUS.

Amazing are the laws
 That rule the universe, and keep the world
 In order just !---my thoughts have been-employ'd
 On other things.

SOCRATES.

What can employ your thoughts
 With so much pleasing joy, as thus to view
 The works of God ? does not the genial sun
 Warm and invigorate all things on earth
 Fervent with life of every goodly kind,
 And shew them too ? but as the human frame
 Is form'd of mould terrestrial which perspires
 Much of its vital heat, have not the gods
 Ordain'd the night for rest, to give fresh springs
 To life and labour ? and when evening ray
 Dips in the shade, is not the firmament
 Bedeck'd with lights, that run their wonted round
 In circles multiform ? anon shines forth
 The splendid regent of the night, array'd
 In silver robes, and paints in soften'd shades
 All nature's charms ; till the bright orient sun
 Slow-gleaming thro' the dark and cloudy dusk

By fair Aurora led---again revives
The face of things, and bids the lamps of night
Withdraw their ray: is this oeconomy
A proof of Providence? or does it speak
The laws of chance?

ARISTODEMUS.

O Socrates, you speak
Of things inanimate which must be mov'd
By some external force; but I would chuse
To hear your thoughts of essences, that act
And move at will.

SOCRATES.

Thither I did intend
To bend my way, had not your hasty mind
Check'd my discourse, and broke the chain of thought
I meant to hold---Say then, are not some men
For wisdom deem'd superior to the rest
Of human kind?

ARISTODEMUS.

Yes doubtless; Homer stands
For ever foremost in the roll of fame
For epic strains; and Sophocles high rais'd
In buskins trod; the forming chizzel grac'd
The hand of Polyclète; and living lines
From Zeuxes' pencil flow'd.

SOCRATES.

Say then, my friend,
Are they, who images of things express,

Of mind and motion void ; or they who gave
 Spirit and energy to what they raise
 In living form, most worthy to be held
 In admiration ?

ARISTODEMUS.

Doubtless, living forms
 By far excell ; for living forms arise
 Not from blind chance, but wise and deep design
 Which spring from reason ; and the works express
 The final cause to which they owe their frame.

SOCRATES.

Does not the being then, whose boundless thought
 First plann'd man's frame, so wonderfully made,
 So curious and so fearful ; and dispens'd
 The active powers of thought and motion, seem
 To have directed all its various parts
 To useful ends ? was not th' insatiate eye
 With all its coats, made porous to receive
 And drink the limpid light ? does not the ear
 Admit the floating sound ? is it not stor'd
 With organs fit to move the hearing sense,
 Which by the fibres of the brain conveys
 Sounds to the soul ? or why should nature breathe
 This gay profusion of luxurious sweets
 This odorific bliss, had not the wise,
 Th' unerring power of the creative hand
 Prepar'd the organs to imbibe the stream
 That fragrant floats in fields of liquid air ?

Or how from viands could such tastes arise
 Acid or sweet, did not the tongue explore
 Their various juices, and the palate chuse
 What is most grateful?

ARISTODEMUS.

Wond'rous is the frame
 Of man, and seems to speak the hand divine
 Which rais'd the system.

SOCRATES.

Let us farther view
 The human frame, and we shall clearly trace
 Strong lines of Providence---Has it not skreen'd
 The tender ball of sight with moving lids
 That open to the light? and when the dew
 Of sleep steals on the eyes, do they not fall
 Like a soft veil? are not their pliant valves
 Which shut and open, edg'd with fringe of hair
 To guard against the wind that with rude blast
 Might fret the ball? are not the eye-brows form'd
 Like a fair penthouse, to cast off the drops
 That trickle down the front, and would annoy
 The seat of sight? does not the hearing sense
 Receive all kind of sound, and yet the ear
 Is never full? Is not thy living frame
 A portion small of the great mass, which forms
 Th' amazing sum? is not that frame sustain'd
 By intellectual powers, which cannot rise
 From matter void of sense? By sequel fair.

Should you not thence infer, that intellect,
 Forecast, and wisdom, from some power flow,
 As from a source of pure celestial light,
 Which shews the moral world to reason's eye,
 And gives it lustre.

ARISTODEMUS.

Yes; these seem the works
 Of art and counsel: but, what human eye
 The artists ever saw? who knows the tools
 With which they work? or what relation bear
 Things incorporeal to material forms?

SOCRATES.

Can you, Aristodemus, see the soul
 Which animates the man? Is not the spring
 That moves and actuates the whole machine,
 Conceal'd from view? and yet, you seem to act
 With counsel and design. Thus, He, who schem'd
 This world immense, presides and rules
 By secret laws; Himself invisible
 To mortal ken, whom yet we fairly trace
 In his material works, which all declare
 A power divine. Say, when you gaze direct,
 Full on the sun, is not the radiant orb
 Lost in the blaze of light? and yet the sun
 Paints heav'n and earth to view. When thunder peals
 Thro' the aerial vault, is not the bolt
 Hurl'd on unseen, tho' visible the signs
 It leaves behind? or, when fierce warring winds

Spread desolation round, can you discern
 The wings with which they fly, tho' nature speak
 Their rapid force? And if there's aught in man
 That does resemble God; it is the soul
 Which guides all parts, yet cannot be discern'd
 By sharpest eye. Cease then to doubt of things
 Latent from sight, and to deny a God
 Because you cannot see him with an eye
 To mortals given.

ARISTODEMUS.

You seem, sage Socrates,
 To reason right; and I would gladly pay
 Devotion to the gods, were their chief care
 Employ'd on men: but do not men live here
 In common with the brutes, who all enjoy
 The powers you speak of, in a high degree,
 Higher perhaps than we?

SOCRATES.

Can you conceive
 That gods are careless of the general good
 Of human kind, when you must own that man
 Is of all creatures that respire in air,
 Alone of frame erect, ordain'd to view
 The azure round, whether the sun by day
 Heaven's vault illumine, or the spangling stars
 Glitter by night? are not the optic lights,
 Which view all nature in her finest dress,
 Plac'd in the highest region of the frame

Objects remote to see, like centinels
In a watch-tow'r, to guard against approach
Of dangers from abroad ? while reptiles creep
Along the ground, or draw a sinuous train
Of many a fold ; and others, range the wilds,
Or browse the flow'ry mead, on feet that serve
No other end than to conduct their frame
Of aspect prone : have not the gods benign
Furnish'd the human race with hands and arms
Plac'd near the seat of fight, by faultless skill
Fitted for useful ends ?

ARISTODEMUS.

I know no ends

They mean to serve, than what the brutes pursue
Without their aid : do they not live at will,
And propagate their kinds ? what more could men
With boasted hands ?

SOCRATES.

Aristodemus, judge,

How without hands, could fruits be rais'd to feed
These weakly frames, and keep the mould'ring clay
From falling into dust ? or how could cloaths
Be made to guard against the bitter blast
Of rigid cold, or the fierce flaming fires
Of solar ray ? could houses, made for ends
Of necessary use, spontaneous rise
And settle into order ? could the ox
Bleed at the altar, to appease the gods

And make atonement, without hands to fell
 And dress the sacrifice? do not the hands
 Make marble breathe, and canvases speak the deeds
 Of deathless heroes, and transmit their fame
 To future ages? are not these strong proofs
 Of God's peculiar care of human kind?

ARISTODEMUS.

You reason like a thief---I can hear
 Your arguments with pleasure; but perhaps
 They may not prove conclusive in the end.

SOCRATES.

Are not all other animals depriv'd
 Of speech and elocution? but in man
 The tongue is form'd to vocal sound, and speaks
 The language of the mind, whence all the sweets
 Of converse flow, for words express to sense
 All such ideas as the soul receives
 From outwards objects, latent else to ken
 Of reason's eye; for the soul cannot think
 Without materials fit, whereon to raise
 Its speculations.

ARISTODEMUS.

What? do not all brutes
 In sounds dissimilar their sense convey
 When fear, or pain, the beating heart assails,
 Or when their bosoms with warm pleasure glow?
 Is not the neighing of a horse express'd
 In varied sound, when in the bloom of life

Florid and fresh, he wantons o'er the plains,
Stung with the fervour of a youthful love ?
Or when from nostrils wide he darts the flame
Of kindling war, and snuffs the blaze of arms ?
Do not the feather'd kind, of varied plume,
Vary their strain, as rising passions swell
The heaving breast ? other the notes, which hawks
Or eagles use ; as quest of food, or fight,
Directs the sound : when flying near to land
The full-gorg'd cormorant forsakes the deep,
And sends his screams before him to the beach ;
Other his tone, than when with level wing
He skims the surface of the briny wave.
Many of plummy race oft' change their notes,
As temperatures of air or weather change :
The tempest-loving raven, and the crow
Intelligent of seasons, brooding clouds
With hoarser throat demand, and with fell croak
The gathering storms, and rising winds foretell.

S O C R A T E S.

'Tis true, Aristodemus, that as brutes
Of reason void, are influenc'd by sense ;
They oft' their fears, or fond desires express
By inarticulate sounds, as appetite
Or sense directs, when strong instinctive powers
Of nature animal, exert their force
And agitate the frame : so, nature speaks,
And nature is their law, who never swerves

From the first rules her Maker first impress'd
 On creatures mov'd by sense. But man is form'd
 Of a superior nature made to suit
 His intellectual faculties, that soar
 Beyond the verge of sense, and raise the soul
 To lofty thoughts, which when reduc'd
 Into true order by the settling mind,
 He can express in words that are the types
 Which give subsistence sure to his ideas
 Regularly laid Hence, man with man
 Can conversation hold, or joyous hymn
 With vocal symphony their Maker's praise,
 Like spirits glorified who sweetly tune
 The spheres to harmony; or mutual lend
 And borrow reason, as the sister moon
 From Phoebus draws her rays, which she again
 Diffuses thro' the vault of heaven, to gild
 The dreary face of night---This is the state
 Of man ordain'd for high and noble ends.

ARISTODEMUS.

O Socrates! my soul begins to feel
 The force of heavenly truth---go on, great sage,
 To clear the argument with stronger proof,
 And let conviction still reform my mind,
 By thee impress'd with dignity of thought,

SOCRATES.

Let us investigate with farther search
 The human nature in a higher light,

That point of view, wherein man joyous claims
Relation to his Maker : for is not man
Alone of living things on earth, endued
With mind and soul, by which he clearly knows
That God exists, and that he rais'd a world
For this his favourite creature ; yet requires
No other tribute than a grateful mind
To holy adoration train'd, and pure
Conceptions of the Deity, supreme
O'er gods and men, who with his essence fills
Th' extended universe, thus wond'rous fair,
Himself how wond'rous then ! unspeakable
And veil'd amid the lustre which surrounds
His glorious throne, too dazzling to be seen
By mortal eye : that pleasure is reserv'd
For righteous men ; for when this brittle frame
Of finer mould by which the soul performs
Her operations, shall dissolve and mix
With genial earth, the heav'n-born soul springs forth
And freely mingles in the blest abodes.

ARISTODEMUS.

My soul relents---From what you have advanc'd ;
Of consequence I clearly can allow,
That men live here like demigods and reign
Over inferior beings ; and when death
Removes this cloud, the intellectual part
Shall still subsist.

SOCRATES.

Your inference is right :

This beauteous world, with all the breathing tribes
That move in air, or earth, or seas, was rais'd
To serve the use of man, while here he lives
His destin'd time : but when the cumbrous load
Which presses down the soul, that particle
Of air divine which animates the frame,
And wings the mind to contemplations high,
Shall cease to act, and is by death resolv'd
To its first principles ; then shall the soul,
For ever sever'd from material mould,
Feel virtue's quick'ning power and heavenly light.

ARISTODEMUS.

I see your reasons in united force ;
And find my soul inclin'd to think, that gods
Take care of man : one doubt unsatisfy'd
Disturbs me still---Is not man left to tread
A mazy round, where doubts to doubts succeed
In wild confusion mixt, without a clue
To guide his steps, and lead him to the bower
Where virtue, heav'nly goddesses rich array'd
In her celestial robes, presiding, rules
The moral world, by laws too darkly plan'd
To be distinctly seen ? Why do not gods
By ministerial agency convey
Their will to men, that they may clearly view
The lines of duty, and pursue the path

That leads where moral rectitude is found ?

SOCRATES.

Does not, Aristodemus, the fair code
Of nature's laws, voluminous and vast,
Lie open to your eye ? May not you read
The marks of shame and turpitude impress'd
On every vice, and trace the heav'nly charms
That shine on virtue's brow, pleasing as light
That issues from the sun ? are you not mov'd
By nature's impulse, to admire the garb
Which beauty wears, and to avert the eye
From foul deformities, whatever shape
Or colour they assume ?

ARISTODEMUS.

All this is true

Of beauteous nature, when she means to please
The curious eye, and to present herself
In best attire ; but what analogy
Do nature's beauties, which affect the seat
Of sense corporeal, bear to the charms
Of moral virtue, which remote from sight
Lie latent in the mind ?

SOCRATES.

Come ; bend your thoughts

To moral and material light, and see
The fair analogy : material light
Flow from the source of day, and paints the world
In various bloom ; before it fly the clouds

Shot thro' with orient beam, and the blue vault
 Of heaven shines : the moral is a ray
 Of rectitude divine, which gives the mind
 To view ideal beauties, only seen
 By reason's eye. As the material light
 Warms and invigorates the genial seeds
 Which nature sows, and brings them forth to life
 Florid and fair ; so does the moral ray,
 By an etherial influence raise to life
 True virtue's seeds, congenial to the soul
 When first it felt the forming hand that rais'd
 The moral system.

ARISTODEMUS.

This is stated right,
 And I assent : but still in what respect
 Do moral and material light consist
 With divination ? I would have the gods
 Tell me in every act, what suits the state
 Of intellectual beings ? what is rais'd
 From reason's laws ? and what we must derive
 From a superior aid, which we express
 By divination ?

SOCRATES.

When th' almighty God
 By ministerial agents, form'd to speak
 His ruling will, answers the humble suit
 Of the Athenian state, if reason fails
 To give a final sentence ; can you think

He does not speak to you? or when to Greeks
Taken at large, or to the human kind,
However scatter'd o'er the face of earth,
He sends his solemn portents to denounce
What shall hereafter happen, or what now
Is fittest to be done; can you imagine
That you alone, of all the human race,
Lie quite exempted from his special care?
Can you conceive that gods would plant in man
An innate notion, that they can dispense
Or pain or pleasure, if in real fact
They want the power to do so? or that men
Should be so long deceiv'd, without least sense
Of the delusion? must you not confess
That realms and cities, which have foremost stood
In the records of fame, for arts polite
And wisdom's lore renown'd, have ever held
The gods in veneration high, and rais'd
Temples and altars sacred to the use
Of rites divine? and still the farther back
You cast your eye on ages more remote,
Do not you find that divination reign'd
With stronger force, and deeper fix'd the sense
Of watchful Providence?

ARISTODEMUS.

What! can the God
You call supreme, reside above the spheres,
Yet rule the world with universal sway,

And keep each individual in his view ?

This seems a paradox, which wants a proof---

SOCRATES.

You know, Aristodemus, that the soul,
By active power the body moves, and guides
With arbitrary rule, and keeps the nerves
In proper tension, which by secret springs
Play on the muscles: hence, can sense perceive
What is impress'd, and to the soul convey
The images, from which it raises plans
Of truth and science: must not therefore God
Who schem'd this system, and whose essence fills
Th'unbounded universe, at will direct,
And rule the settled whole by secret laws
Which operate unseen, beyond the verge
Of human sense? does not your eye extend
To half the firmament, and clearly see
Objects remote, transmitted thro' the thin
Pellucid air? and cannot God, whose eye
No darkness veils, with undivided view
Pervade the universe, and see the parts
Of things in embryo, ere the plastic powers
Have perfected the work? is not the spark
Divine which moves the intellectual powers
To think and act, with as much ease employ'd
On things in Egypt, or in Sicily,
As well as here? does it not wing its way
As swift as lightning? and can He, who reigns
Sole universal Lord of heaven and earth

Be circumscrib'd ? He, to whom men apply
 In every place ? He, whose all-hearing ear
 Yields free attention to the humble suit
 Of a meek heart, in solemn form address'd
 To the sole Father of the gods and men
 And beings of all kinds ?

ARISTODENUS.

O Socrates,

You reason right ! the being who contriv'd
 This beauteous world, is only visible
 In these his works, which speak the powerful hand
 That gave them birth. My mind is quite at ease,
 And I imbibe the sacred stream of truth
 Which from thy soul with heav'nly wisdom flows.

[Exit ARIST.

CHORUS.

All nature's works aloud proclaim
 The great Creator's glorious name,
 Where'er we turn the thinking mind,
 The traces of his care we find.
 At his command, who rules the spheres,
 And here in various forms appears,
 Alternate roll the day and night,
 One for rest, and one for light :
 And as the year-directing sun
 Does thro' the signs his journey run,
 The seasons in successive train
 Vicissitude of rule maintain :

Now, Zephyrus and Flora spread
Ambrosial odors o'er the mead :
Now, Ceres does her harvest yield,
And paint with wavy gold the field :
Now, Autumn his ripe fruitage shows,
And drunk with wine the vintage flows :
Now, Winter's frost and nitrous snow
Prepare the way for vernal blow :
Each, as the year revolves, profuse
Of blessings given for human use.
Consider how the sun retires
And gradually withdraws his fires ;
Left sudden cold should chill the blood,
And check too soon the circling flood :
And how with gentle pace and slow,
His radiant beam begins to glow ;
Left tortur'd sense too soon should feel
The fervor of his rapid wheel,
Ere rising gradual in his strength,
He shoots his ray to utmost length :
Thus, from each tropic does he turn,
Nor prone to freeze, nor prone to burn :
Is this retreat, and this advance,
The work of Providence or chance ?
Sage Socrates has gain'd the field,
And made Aristodemus yield :
Aristodemus, too, is blest ;
His mind serene, his soul at rest.

A C T II. S C E N E I.

SCENE, SOCRATES's house.

SOCRATES solus.

I FEEL a firmness in my heart that speaks
All shall be well---the Deity, on whom
My soul depends, and who informs my mind
To think and judge aright, * restrain'd my will
When twice I strove to make a fair defence---
Hence do I clearly learn, that God decrees
From this corporeal pris'n I should be freed.
Parent of all things ! what I hold is thine :
Chiefly th' intellectual part, whose being,
Of thy divinity true semblance bears.

Enter HERMOGENES.

HERMOGENES.

Hail venerable sage ! thy visage seems
To wear the smile of ease ; and shew a mind
Serene and calm.

SOCRATES.

The mind can never want
True-tasted joys, when disengag'd from earth
And mean pursuits, in search of truths sublime
Fair beauty charms, in her moral lustre.

* Xen. in Apol.

HERMOGENES.

Thy soul, great Socrates, is ever bent
On meditations deep, which merit praise
From gods and men : but I beseech thee think
Of making thy defence ; full well you know
The sentence is gone forth, and thou shalt stand
A fiery trial ; thy accusers hold
Close consultation ; and the time is fix'd
When the court sits to hear the heavy charge.

SOCRATES.

Know then, my friend, if innocence can plead
A righteous cause, I am prepar'd to stand
The strictest scrutiny. For my whole life
Alone is my defence.

HERMOGENES.

O Socrates !

Athenian judges by persuasive arts
Of eloquence misled, do oft acquit
The greatest criminal ; as oft condemn
The innocent to death.

SOCRATES.

Let rage discharge
Its hottest bolts ; I can sustain the shock,
Intrepid and unmov'd ; fixt as the laws
Of him who reigns above : his will is just
And therefore shall be mine.

HERMOGENES.

Thy sentiments

Are truly great, and shew in native light
The dignity of man : but, tho' thy mind
Be resolute and firm, do not the gods
Approve of human means, to save a life
Which only they can give ?

S O C R A T E S.

If he who sits

Supreme o'er gods and men, permit the laws
To lay this body waste ; it is no more
Than what I owe to death, which soon will strike
The final blow. Was not this earth-born frame
I bear about me made to feel decay,
And suffer change ? the soul is Socrates ;
And that shall never die : 'tis now on wing
To meet the blessing which my God decrees.

H E R M O G E N E S.

O Socrates ! the law of nature soon
Will close the scene of life, and thou shalt fall
Like mellow fruit that from a goodly tree
Drops in full age---do not anticipate
The fatal hour.

S O C R A T E S.

The Deity, who saw

How each fine thread in the fair web of life
Was wrought in nature's loom, ere yet the heart
Began to beat, or breathing lungs imbib'd
Th' expansive air ; that Deity, by whom
I think and act, knows when the spring of life

Should cease to play : and duty bids me pay
The debt of nature, when he makes the claim.

HERMOGENES.

'Tis true, my Socrates---we must resign
Our lives on his demand ; but how can we
Foresee the point of time, wherein he means
To call us to account ?

SOCRATES.

That voice divin. ,
That pure ethereal Daemon which restrains
My resolutions, when it finds they tend
To hurtful or immoral ends, forbade
That I should flee from justice, and the force
Of civil laws.

HERMOGENES.

Wond'rous indeed, the charge
Your Daemon gave !

SOCRATES.

Are you surpriz'd, that God
Should know the season when I ought to leave
This house of clay, and soar to regions free
From pain and death ? Melitus may destroy,
But cannot hurt me ; what is Socrates
His malice cannot reach.

HERMOGENES.

O Socrates !

Thy life is worthy of the care of Heaven ;
And if the God with-holds thee from defence

Of spotless innocence, he doubtless means
 By other methods to prepare a way
 For thy escape, and snatch thee from the hand
 Of furious rage.

S O C R A T E S.

'Tis true, my friend, he means
 This frame should fall, while yet my thinking powers
 Are strong and clear, and the soul fit to mix
 With spirits void of guilt, that never feel
 The violence of force, but free as light
 Spontaneous move, obsequious to the laws
 That rule their being.

H E R M O G E N E S.

What you say is proof
 Of a superior state, on which your soul
 Seems too intent, ere yet the race of life
 Is fully run: you, train'd to virtue's lore
 Are ever ready to resign the life.
 Your Maker gave you; but, O think, what loss
 Your friends shall suffer, when the living stream
 In which pure wisdom flow'd, shall be remov'd
 From public use! think how a wicked age
 Shall want your hand to hold the reins that rule
 The moral state! O! do but calmly think
 Of this catastrophe, and you will see
 All proper means to shun the snares that lie
 In wait for your destruction.

SOCRATES.

O, my friend !

My life's of import small ; for what remains
By nature's laws, I cannot call my own
To any useful purpose of my being.
Now I look back with pleasure on a life
Well spent in virtue's cause ; I can recall
Fresh to the mind the reasons that support
My moral precepts, and reveal the springs
Of good and evil : now in connexion just,
The laws which ought to rule this civil state
Are full in view : but should more years roll o'er
This tempest-beaten head, my harrafs'd mind
Would lose its force, as when the evening ray
Is lost in night : the ranging eye would fail
To view great nature's splendor, and the world
Be one large blank : nor could the untun'd ear
Imbibe the happy sounds, and taste the sweets
Which flow from friendship's tongue : the soul unfit
To cull ideas from a mingled mass,
And shape them into form : the memory,
Unable to retain, what erst I gain'd
From choice reflections, made on nature's laws ;
From which, as from a treasury I drew,
As moral virtue, or the public weal
Requir'd my aid, still ready to expend
All I could gather for the common good---
This would Melitus own---did he not view

My life with jaundic'd eyes : I therefore chuse
To die, while joyous converse with my friends
Shall spread a lustre o'er the gloomy hour.

HERMOGENES.

I wish I could prevail---O may the God
On whom you place your confidence, support
The merit of your cause, and guard a life
Which wisdom honours, and which virtue loves.

[Exit HER.

CHORUS.

Hail happy sage, by men admir'd,
And by a voice divine inspir'd !
Thy courage does exalt the mind
To notions high and thoughts refin'd,
In all thy sentiments we view
Something sublime, and something new.
With heav'nly warmth thy virtue glows,
And shews the source from which it flows,
To thoughts of death you bravely yield,
And conquer, when you lose the field,
In haste to leave this clouded state,
Eager to enter heaven's blest gate,
Where objects new fresh joys dispense,
And please the intellectual sense ;
Where the soul ranges with delight,
And drinks th' eternal stream of light.

S C E N E II.

SOCRATES solus.

Methinks I feel uncommon spirits flow
Thro' all-my frame ; and the soul-cheering voice ;
Whose kind monitions I most sacred deem,
Tells me there is a place where all that now
Seems so unequal here, shall be adjudg'd
By weight unerring, as they higher rise,
Or lower fall, in the celestial scales
Of justice infinite, which shall award
To each its portion---Then shall Providence
Reveal the springs that move the moral world ;
And shall to merit or demerit deal
In just proportion, vengeance or reward---
Virtue, hail ! thy influence first reform'd
The savage mind, and from his dens and caves
Call'd forth untutor'd man, to bear the reins
Of civil rule ! from thee, as from their head,
Sprung love and friendship, and the social laws
From thee deriv'd their moral force ! one day
Spent in thy precepts, is to be preferr'd
to an eternity of vice !

Enter a Messenger from court.

MESSENGER.

All hail !

The court now awful sits ; and I am sent

To call thee forth to justice.

SOCRATES.

Is the court

Prepar'd to hear me? Is Melitus there?

MESSENGER.

He is---and ready to make good the charge

He brings against thee.

SOCRATES.

It may be so---

I'll follow thee.---O! Author of my life!

Sole self-existent essence, from whose power

All things derive their being, and whose hand

Sustains the universe! be bounteous still

To give me what is good! and should I sue

For what I ought not, be it thine to check

The fond desire, and teach me how to pray

For what I ought, how best I may pursue

What best becomes the dignity of man

Made for eternity: and thou sweet voice,

Offspring of Heav'n, that dost pursue my soul

Thro' all its turnings, let not fear of death

Move me to plead, what may be found unfit

For me to utter, or for God to hear! [Exit SOCR.

CHORUS of etherial SPIRITS.

First SPIRIT.

I gave his mind with ease to move,

Second SPIRIT.

I fill'd it with celestial love,

First SPIRIT.

I gave him courage to impart
The moral dictates of the heart.

Second SPIRIT.

I calm'd the temper of his brain,
And made the passions all serene.

BOTH.

Sage Socrates can never stray
From heav'n-born virtue's sacred way;
Or from the laws, which God design'd
Should rule the motions of his mind.

A C T III.

S C E N E, the Tribunal.

PRESIDENT, JUDGES, MELITUS, SOCRATES.

MELITUS.

NOBLE Athenians, he, whom I arraign,
 Has introduc'd new gods, other than those
 Whom Athens worships ; and by subtle arts
 To him best known, does alienate the minds
 Of youth from firm attachment to the laws
 Of the Athenian state, by novel schemes
 Of virtue and religion, form'd to lay
 Our sacred rites aside ; and introduce
 Doctrines abhorrent from the sacred laws
 Of our forefathers, who were wont to teach
 That all the blessings we derive from heav'n
 Are owing to the gods, when each is serv'd
 By ministeries due and solemn rites
 According to his rank : but Socrates
 Talks high of inspiration, and a Daemon
 Who brings him new behests from heav'n, and fills
 His mind with notions alien from the sense
 Of civil laws, and mysteries divine
 Which we hold sacred.

PRESIDENT.

Let the criminal

S O C R A T E S.

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Plead to the cause, if such a cause can bear
The least defence.

First JUDGE.

It is a heavy charge
Which seems to carry death.

Second JUDGE.

But let the cause
Be fairly heard :---we sit on life and death.

ALL.

Let it be heard.

PRESIDENT.

Ye reverend sages,
Highly renown'd in the Athenian state,
For all the wisdom of the temper'd breast ;
We do not here convene in common form
To hear this single cause, but to support
The civil laws, and the religious rites
On which our state depends---be your debates
With calm investigation always rul'd.

SOCRATES.

O ye Athenians, I am summon'd here
To plead the cause of innocence and virtue---
This furrow'd front, and silver-shining hair
Confess my age : this country is my mother,
My father Athens' son ; here did I first
Imbibe th' enlivening air, and as fair truth,
As copious knowledge join'd with wisdom, flow'd
From learning's spring, I trac'd the living lines

Of virtue's laws, till seventy suns have roll'd
Their annual round---

MELITUS.

O judges, bid him speak
Directly to the charge---this sophister
Has learn'd the art to change at will the modes
Of right and wrong, and make dark causes wear
A fair disguise.

SOCRATES.

Ye must, Athenians, know
That truth is sacred; and I call the * gods
Who rule this state to witness that I speak
The dictates of my heart, in language void
Of art or ornament; that best becomes
The orator, who pleads a labour'd cause
For fame or fortune; but that florid strain

* It may perhaps surprize the reader to meet several passages in this poem, where Socrates seems to acknowledge polytheism, though condemned for holding the unity of the Godhead; but this seeming admission he saw necessary to ingratiate himself with the people, in order to propagate his own doctrines, and wean them from their superstitious idolatry—he therefore complied with their outward ceremonies, by sacrificing (a) to the gods on the public altars; and by thus conforming to their modes of worship (b) he protected himself from the prosecution of the priesthood, and had frequent opportunities of conversing with the most considerable Athenians, and by his cogent arguments of gaining them over to the belief of one supreme, and only God.

(a) Xen. Memor.

(b) Plat. Apol.

Wears not the garb of truth, which should appear
In plain and simple drefs---Melitus argues
That I suborn new gods, to overturn
The sacred rites, which have for ages past
Govern'd this state---Were this bold charge as true
As 'tis severe, I doubtless ought to feel
The rigour of the laws, and should resign
My life a victim to appease the wrath
Of injur'd Heaven---But from what latent cause
The charge should rise, that I have introduc'd
Doctrines abhorrent from the sacred rites
Of our forefathers, is a mystery
I can't unveil : for on all festal days
On public altars, and in solemn form,
I pay my vows ; this might Melitus see
In open day, did not pale envy cast
A mist before his eyes. Or how can I
Suborn new deities, when I have taught
That a still voice from heaven inspires my soul
With sacred thoughts, and tells me what is fit
And proper to be done ? * They, who consult
The notes of birds, or omens draw from men,
Gather conjectures from the vocal sound,
And act as that directs ; when thunders roll
Thro' the aerial way, do not they speak
With awful voice, and carry on their wings
The fates of empires ? does not Pythia swell

* Xenoph. in Apol. Socr.

With sacred rage, and impulse not her own,
When from the tripod of the Delphic god
She 'speaks th' Almighty purpose?---Now, that he
Who rules supreme, can take a simple view
Of all futurity, and see the fates
Of things in embryo; nations do confess
As well as I: but then, while others hold
That signs and omens of themselves portend
Future events; I teach they only act
As ministerial agents that derive
Their telling powers from God, whose voice alone
All divination guides: for, even I,
This Socrates, whom envy here arraigns,
Have told my friends what good or bad effects
Would from their conduct rise, should they pursue
What was resolv'd; and I was never found
To err from truth.

[Here a tumult arises among the judges.]

MELITUS.

Now, Socrates, you see
The judges are incens'd, and cannot yield
Assent to what you say; nor do they think
That you are more in favour with the gods
Than *they* who seem most worthy of their care---
What arrogance! does inspiration suit
A mind like thine?

SOCRATES.

If they will not believe

What I assert; I hope they will attend
 To what the oracle pronounc'd, when Chaerephon,
 A friend to the Athenian state, enquir'd
 What the god thought of me, and many stood
 Prepar'd to hear the sacred voice aloud
 Proclaim my praise: and tho' our common friend
 Be now no more, * his brother is alive,
 And can attest the fact: let him come forth
 And speak his soul.

MELITUS.

O judges! can ye bear
 This insolence of tongue? no; now I see
 The tumult rage.

SOCRATES.

Ye know, Athenians, this
 Most solemn place should ever be attach'd
 To sacred truth---hear me again, and learn
 How little I assume---When he who form'd
 The Spartan laws with humble suit address'd
 Apollo's shrine; the Pythian stood suspense
 Whether to hail Lycurgus as a god,
 Or call him man: but me, in whom he found
 No signs of deity, he only rais'd
 High in the scale of prudence, and pronounc'd
 That I in wisdom's lore by far excell'd
 The human race; wisdom not mine, but given:
 Nor have I plum'd myself with proud conceit,

* Chaerocrates.

Nor 'mongst my fellows borne my forehead high,
As conscious of superior worth of mind,
And more exalted knowledge; well I know
All talents rare, all rich accomplishments
Are given by God, to the possessor's trust,
For purposes of public well alone,
With modesty and meekness best employ'd :
And if ye will but backward turn your eyes
On my past life, and view its various scenes
In all their lights; perhaps ye may assent
To what the god declar'd; for from the time
Of early age, I labour'd to explore
The depths of reason; first, indeed, I rang'd
The wide etherial way, to trace the orbs
That various roll above, and measure times
In due proportion to the laws that rule
Their revolutions : but as this pursuit
Was dark and intricate, beyond the ken
Of reason's eye; 'twas I, who first brought down
Philosophy from heav'n, and made it shine
In courts and cities : I first taught the laws
That humanize the soul, and make it taste
The sweets of moral charms : I found the path
That leads where justice reigns, and fix'd the bounds
Of right and wrong : this does all Athens know,
Whose citizens in numbers flock to hear
My moral lectures, which I freely give
Without reward; while venal sophists sell

Their gilded bane, which taints the tender seeds
Of virtue ere they spring, and gives the mind
A turn to vice : have not I close pursu'd
Their specious wiles, and shewn the snares they spread
To catch unguarded souls ? Athenians, say
If this be true ; do not I merit praise
From gods and men ? and that I speak the truth
Your silence is a proof. But I infer
That if we take the oracle aright,
It only deem'd me wisest of all men,
Because the narrow bounds of human minds
I best have known, and most have been convinc'd
That God alone is wise---But ye are told
That I corrupt the youth---can doctrines form'd
To meliorate the mind with manly sense,
And give the soul to taste fair virtue's charms ;
Can dictates of this kind divert the thoughts
Of giddy youth from paying due regard
To civil institutes and sacred rites
In veneration held ?

MELITUS.

O Socrates !

The case is plain---for I could here produce
Undoubted proofs, that by some artful wiles
You gain the youth, and make them more obey
You than their parents.

SOCRATES.

I confess the charge

You bring against me, and with ease can shew
How wide you stray---Say, when disease or pain
Assails the human frame, do parents mix
The healing draught ? does not the patient run
To Aesculapius' sons for aid, who know
The malady and cure ? and is it deem'd
No proof of prudence to restore the mind
To a sound state by proper means of cure
Which operate with force, and give the soul
To think aright; ere yet the passions rule
With freedom uncontroul'd ? do not we find
That even fauns forsake their dams to feed
Where pasture calls ? do not the tender plants
Rejoice in fertile soil, where genial heat
Invigorates the glebe ? view nature round,
And you will find that every thing inclines
To what is best : and should not human minds,
Offspring of heaven, ray of omnipotence,
By innate impulse tend where science leads
To rational delight, which gives a spring
To intellectual powers ? When suits depend
In civil courts, do not Athenians chuse
The ablest orators, to plead their cause
With strength of reason; and adjust the bounds
Of right and wrong ? or when they mean to send
Their armies forth, or to apply the force
Of penal laws ; does not superior worth
Direct their suffrages, without regard

To nearest friends? do even fathers stand
 In competition? or can brothers claim
 A preference, when public voices speak
 Aloud for merit?

MELITUS.

This I own is true,
 But with thy circumstance it little suits:
 Have you aught else to plead?

SOCRATES.

Is it not strange
 That other men, by merit rais'd, should meet
 With high esteem: and yet that I, so fam'd
 For moral discipline, the greatest good
 Which heaven can bestow, should here be call'd
 In question for my life? Is it a proof
 That I deny the gods, and introduce
 A new religion alien from the laws
 Of the Athenian state, when here I stand
 Arraign'd for virtue's cause, which by the gods
 And all wise men was ever sacred deem'd?
 But let us change the scene.---I clearly see
 In this great court, fathers and sons, who long
 My dictates sought; let them stand forth and speak
 Their inmost soul, whether they found the stream
 Corrupt or pure---their silence seems to plead
 The merit of my cause---they know I stand
 On a sure ground, unshaken as a rock
 That bears the force of storms, yet still remains

Firm on the base, and rears its lofty head
Above the clouds. While therefore purple blood
Runs thro' these veins, I neither can repent
Nor change my conduct. When I carried arms,
Let Potidaea, let Amphipolis
Confess my courage: let Boeotians say
How firm I stood at Delium, on the edge
Of battle where it rag'd; and when a flood
Of arms pour'd on us, measur'd back the field
Only by inches, while our soldiers fled
On all the wings of fear: I did retreat;
But like a lion that disdains repulse,
I fac'd the foe, and held my sword prepar'd
Against assault: if I, who thus in war
Approv'd my courage to restore the rights
Which Athens claim'd, should now desert the post
Which Heav'n assign'd me, and thro' fear of death
Cease to prepare the minds of youth
For virtue's laws, and make them fit to rule
In peace or war; then might I freely own
That I am justly cited to appear
Before this great tribunal, here conven'd
To sit on life or death. Or should the laws
Remit their force, in case I should renounce
My former doctrines; whom should I obey?
God? or this court?---Know then, Athenians,
That with my latest breath I will exhort
Both young and old, and use all proper means

To purge their souls from vice, and make them soar
 Above this fordid earth, on which their thoughts
 Seem too intent ; unconscious that the soul
 Is the whole man, and should be rul'd by laws
 Of a superior kind, which suit the port
 Of intellectual beings that partake
 Of purest essence, flowing from the source
 Of immaterial life.---This, judges, is the sum
 Of what I have to plead---If aught remains
 As yet unanswer'd, let Melitus speak,
 Who call'd me forth to judgment.

MELITUS.

O Socrates,

I charge you with a crime, which Athens knows
 As well as I---you freely give advice
 To private friends, and yet you never mix
 In public councils where affairs of state
 Demand your presence ; which is deem'd a proof
 Of disaffection to the common weal
 Under whose care you live.

SOCRATES.

Since first I found

The sacred source whence virtue springs ; nor age
 Nor station check'd my zeal to press the force
 Of moral laws, on which the civil state
 Mainly depends : for must not justice hold
 An even scale ? and fortitude arise
 From an exalted mind, that sees the wheels

D

By which things move, and can retard the springs
Or actuate their force? say, do I sow
The seeds of virtue, in a place retir'd
From public view? does any private school
Conceal my doctrines, as unfit to view
The open light? do not the common ways
Where all resort, the streets and courts and camps
Ring with my voice? and yet I never chang'd
My moral conduct, but with strength of mind
Unshaken from within, or from without,
Pursued my course, and stem'd the tide of vice
Where'er I found it flow, without least view
To friendship or to gain: and that I shun
Public assemblies, is not the result
Of disaffection, but of voice divine
That moves my soul, and bids me not engage
In state affairs. Nor is it strange that God
By an interior impulse should convey
His will to man; for does not soul to soul
Communicate its thoughts, by ways that suit
Our present state? and may not God, who form'd
The soul to thought, and sees the secret springs
By which it operates, direct the mind
In all its motions? might he not foresee
That should I meddle in the public weal,
That vivid zeal with which he fir'd my soul
To plead the cause of right, would soon destroy
This crazy frame, and frustrate the design

He had in view ? But, say, does he who wears
 The civil robe, or he who trains the mind
 To rules of justice, and the sacred laws
 Of truth and virtue, more deserve the name
 Of a true patriot ? he who fills the chair,
 Or he who moves in an inferior orb,
 But always with design to shew mankind
 That virtue is his care ? O candid friends !
 (For such I deem you) think not that I speak
 In pride, or envy ; that ill suits a mind
 Nurtur'd in humble thoughts, conscious that God
 Alone is truly wise : yet this is plain
 To reason's eye, and evidence of sense,
 That a philosopher, who means to plead
 His country's sacred cause, must live retir'd
 From civil broils, and in his calm retreat
 Plan schemes of discipline that may support
 The moral laws and institutes of right,
 Without whose sanction anarchy prevails.

[Here ANYTUS and LYCON present themselves also as the accusers of SOCRATES, and draw over a great number of voices.]

PRESIDENT.

Judges, you've heard what Socrates could plead
 In his own cause, and know the heavy charge
 Melitus brought against him----let the suffrages
 Be fairly number'd : their decision soon
 Will end the point.

Enter an OFFICER of court.

OFFICER.

The votes by thirty-three
Are against Socrates.

PRESIDENT.

Are the suffrages
Exactly taken?

OFFICER.

Sir, the scrutiny

Is fair and right----I've number'd to a man
With faithful care.

PRESIDENT.

As then, O Socrates!

Tho' with a melting heart, I speak their sense---
I must pronounce thee guilty---may the gods
Raise in their souls the sentiments I feel
On thy conviction, and inspire their hearts
With principles humane, which should regard
Thy age and virtue, and best suit the genius
Of a people generous in other things
Of far less moment---Let the judges know
What penalty you think befits the crimes
For which you stand condemn'd.

SOCRATES.

I cannot charge

My soul with guilt, from which I am as free
As children yet unborn; for even now

No perturbation, no pain-brooding thought
 Molests my conscience, but the better part
 Is all serene, as if a ray from heaven
 Had clear'd my soul, and gave it light to view
 A pleasing scene. I know, Melitus means
 Death for my punishment; but it is held,
 The laws can mitigate what he presumes
 A proper penalty: yet what than death
 Can better suit my case? * To pay a fine
 Is to confess a guilt, which more than death
 My soul abhors; or were I so dispos'd,
 A mind is the whole ransom I could pay

* Socrates knew that he could plead for death to be changed into imprisonment, banishment, or a pecuniary fine; but he openly declared, that by chusing any of these punishments he should confess himself guilty——for it was a custom at Athens, not to give sentence in criminal causes at one single hearing: they determined in the first place, whether the accused was guilty or not; and if he was guilty, he was allowed for his last refuge to demand a diminution of the punishment, which his accuser had required against him, and upon that demand of the accused, the judges gave their votes a second time, and after that he received his last sentence. Cicero I. de Oratore.

Diogenes says he offered twenty drachmas (which is about twelve shillings) others mention ten crowns, and Plato makes him promise three hundred crowns, for the payment of which his friends offered to engage; but Xenophon denies this, and says, that he would neither tax himself, nor suffer his friends to do it for him.

Xenophon in Apol.

For my devoted life, perhaps a goal
Might make atonement---but would servile chains
Become the dignity of man, ordain'd
For nobler ends than to preserve a life
On ignominious terms? or should I chuse
To live in exile, rather than submit
To penal death; how could my feeble limbs
Move on from place to place, a foreigner
In ev'ry clime? If here I fail to meet
With due regards; here, where the muses fix'd
Their sacred seat---if when I shew'd a mind
Stable and firm, beyond the usual strength
Of manly force, and lavish'd from my stores
All I was blest with to reform the minds
Of young and old; if here I stand condemn'd
For virtue's cause; what must I not expect
From people less refin'd, whose morals reign
Yet more corrupt and vile? for, even there,
I would pursue the task which Heaven assign'd,
And gave me in strict charge, to purge the soul
From moral turpitude, and make it taste
The heav'nly sweets that virtue's garland wears,
This was the province, which the God who rules
The moral world entrusted to my care,
When he look'd down from heaven, and saw the minds
Of mortals go astray: and should I fall
A martyr to the cause; I have recourse
To a tribunal, where the Judge who knows

The secrets of my heart, as soon can change
 His essence, as depart from the strict rules
 Which bind eternal justice---Countrymen !
 Hear me again, but hear me with a mind
 Benevolent, and congruous to those
 Who sit on death---* Ye have a house, design'd
 For doing honour to the men who serve
 Their country's cause---to that retreat I doom
 This ancient body, shatter'd and decay'd
 Thro' age and labour, there to be maintain'd
 By the republic, for the care I took
 Of Athens' sons, to whom I sacrific'd
 My private interest, which I made to yield
 To public good ; of this my poverty
 Is a clear proof---And I to this award
 Have better claim, than he who wins a prize
 In the Olympic games ; whether he fly
 On rapid wheels, or gains the glorious meed
 By strength of arm : in him, ye only *seem*
 To be a happy people ; but I strove
 To make ye so. This is the penalty
 Which I should chuse, in case I do not fall
 A sacrifice to rage.

* This house was called the Prytaneum ; it was a magnificent building where the council of the Prytanes assembled, and where those who had rendered any signal service to the state, and those who had won the prize at the Olympic games, were maintained at the expence of the public. Plat.

JUDGES.

Th' hemlock !---hemlock.

PRESIDENT.

Now, Socrates, you see to what an end [drink
 Your speech has brought you :---you're condemn'd to
 The deadly draught---

SOCRATES.

'Tis well ; I thank them for it,
 That final draught is more to be desir'd
 Than their rich wines---methinks I feel the taste
 Already on my palate : soon 'twill mix
 With the warm blood, and Socrates shall fly
 From this retarding frame, and soar to heaven---

Judges, at your command, I'm only going
 To suffer death, to which I was condemn'd
 From the first moment of my birth : but they
 By whom I fall, shall feel a heavier doom
 By the decrees of truth ; that sacred law
 By which the living God unerring deals
 Rewards and punishments---To him with joy
 I do resign my being, and submit
 To his eternal will---I know to die
 Is only to put off this mortal garb
 That I may live for ever, where the rage
 Of men has no access, nor can disturb
 The peaceful mansions of rewarded saints
 That never die. Know then, that when the zeal

Of faction cools, ye will deplore the loss
Of this old Socrates, ordain'd by God
Your guardian here, to vindicate the rights
Of virtue's cause, whom I have long pursu'd
Thro' all her tracks, and view'd her virgin train
Array'd in robes of azure and of gold,
The work of heav'n! Me, shall some future bards
Applaud in choral symphony attun'd
To the Creator's praise, from whom descends
All that is good and just; but chiefly Thou,
Transcendent being, offspring of the God
Who reigns alone! O Virtue! I would die
Ten thousand deaths to have thy lovely form
For ever in my view!--But give me leave
To ask this boon, ere I am carried hence;
Permit me to embrace and bid farewell
To these my friends, who in their souls abhor
The guilty deed---O judges (for to you
Whose hearts are open to the truth, that name
Of right belongs) to you I would impart
What now my mind suggests, lest anxious thoughts
Concerning what is here decreed, should raise
Commotion in your souls: know then, the daemon,
That voice prophetic, which I never hear
But when it means to check the fond pursuit
Of something I resolv'd; that voice divine
Neither oppos'd me when I hither came
By order of the court, nor curb'd my tongue

When I purfu'd the merits of my caufe
With a firm mind ; tho' oft' at other times
It ftopt me fhort, perhaps in the midway
Of my difcourfe : from whence I fair infer,
That what was done will in event produce
A real good. If in our lateft breath
The fpirit vanifhes in air, and feels
No more fenfations ; or if death, as fome
Would have us think, be fimilar to fleep
Devoid of vifions even feen in dreams,
When the foul refts from thought ; death in that view
Is one long fcene of eafe, as far from end
As is eternity : but if the foul
Be of immortal effence, and partakes
Of the divinity, as reafon's voice
Aloud proclaims ; then fhall we find that death
Is only a migration to the realms
Where God's enthron'd, ftill ready to receive
Departing fpirits when they are releas'd
From earthly cares : there fhall I foon retire
From this bad world ; and joyous converfe hold
With ancient fages who by virtue rais'd,
And deeds of prowefs, have with merit won
The higheft honours in the court of fame. Exit SOCR.

CHORUS.

Sooner fhall ceafe the circling fun
His ftated annual cburfe to run :
Sooner the living lamps of light
Forget to gild the face of night :

Sooner the magnet cease to draw
The steel, and err from nature's law :
Sooner the fire shall turn to snow,
And seas refuse to ebb and flow :
Than a firm mind to sense of danger yield,
And to the fear of death resign the glorious field.
The man who conscious of his sacred trust,
Is resolute and obstinately just ;
Spurns the proud tyrant with disdain,
Defies his frowns with mind serene ;
From reason's noble height looks down on earth,
And reverences God who gave to virtue birth :
Not the drear waste of frozen zone
Where cheerless winter plants her throne ;
Not the foul damp of gloomy cells,
Where the Cimmerian nation dwells ;
Not the rough whirlwind that deforms
The seas and earth and heaven with storms ;
The firmness of his soul can move ;
Not the red arm of angry Jove
That flings the forked thunder from the sky
And gives it rage to roar, and force of wing to fly.
Should the bright orbs of heaven discordant jar,
And all the elements engage in war ;
Should nature's frame around him fall
And form one rude chaotic ball ;
He would intrepid see the ruins hurl'd,
And stand, unknown to fear, amidst a sinking world.

A C T IV.

S C E N E, the Prison.

Enter SOCRATES, with the GOALER.

GOALER.

MY masters, Sir, their strict commands have given,
With heavy chains to load thy aged limbs,
Until that fatal hapless day arrives
In which thy rigid sentence has thee doom'd
To drink the poison'd cup---I must obey---
Tho' to my soul repugnant is the deed---

SOCRATES.

Sir, do your duty---I can bear the chains
With ease of mind, and hope to-morrow's sun
Will set me free---That which is Socrates
Thou can'st not bind.

[Exit GOALER.]

SOCRATES solus.

Ye darksome forests ! whose embow'ring trees
No light pervades, whose pathless underwoods
Assume the horrors of the grave : ye rocks !
On whose rough base the baleful cypress grows,
And funeral yew ; where solitary birds
Attune their plaintive songs : ye streams, which flow,

Or fullen move along the reedy pool,
Or glide near mossy trunks of trees, and wind
In drear meanders thro' the barren plains
Of marshy grounds---ye dismal low-funk vales,
Beneath whose dark collected shade reclin'd
Deep horrors dwell, exhibit, pour forth all
Your sad despair-creating influence,
Your phantoms, ghastly groupe of fears begot
By black distemper'd fumes on guilty minds
Engend'ring woe, whose dusky, gloomy robe
By crimes put on, distracted fancy wears ;
Who sees, or thinks she sees, on shapes like yours
Her own detested drap'ry dipt in night ;
To souls like these, in sensual styes immers'd,
Redouble all your horrors---to me, they
Nought administer but peace and joy ;
Socrates should find in earth's deep center
Expanded skies, and stars, and sun-shine round ;
There, virtue brighter than them all, will beam
On virtue, and his soul illumine through
Pleasing eternity, his lamp unquench'd.
O Thou, of time, of space, of worlds the cause,
Immenfe, eternal, infinite ! with Thee
The world's duration is but as one day,
And all is gone ! a thousand, thousand suns
May have preceded that we now behold ;
And thousands may succeed with fresh supplies
Of recent light : but as those instruments

Which measure time are mov'd by stated laws,
And social compact of assisting parts ;
So suns to suns for ever tend, and stars
To stars incline in kindred orbs, that dance
In sweet vicinity their destin'd rounds,
Obedient to thy dread command : the gems
That nightly glitter in the vault of heaven,
All vanish at thy will, as the grass fades
A dust and dry beneath the scorching heat
Of summer sun : the twinkling polar-stars
Sparkle with brilliant lustre, but when near
Thy brighter beams intensely hot, are burn'd
And wither'd up, as fades the blushing rose
Before the noon-tide ray, which shot direct
Contracts its silken leaves. When nature young
Contended with the rude chaotic mass,
Ere yet the world was settled into form ;
Ere matter did, by Thee impress'd, receive
Its binding laws ; ere yet the solar beam
Shot thro' the regions of primeval night
Almost impenetrable ; Thou wast then
As far, great Deity supreme ! remov'd
From any origin as now : and when
A second chaos shall devour this world,
And of the universal frame nothing but space
And void remains ; when the new heavens shall shine
With stars that differ from the lamps of light
We now behold, and all have run the round

Of their appointed periods : Thou, great God,
Shalt ever be the same, unknown to waste
Of self-existence ! the quick flight of thought,
Compar'd to whose swift wing, time, sound, and light,
Itself is slow, lost in the endless search,
Can never reach thy height ; for thought soon fails
In the pursuit of that which knows no bounds.
Maker of all things ! Thou art the bright sun
Which measures the immensity of time
With even pace : Thou dost exist with strength
Never to be impair'd : Thine is the light
Of one perpetual, one meridian-day
Which ne'er can change ; but, as like lesser suns
Which shew an orient dawn, Thou ne'er didst rise,
So wilt Thou never set. Father of light !
Give me to feel the influence of thy ray
Thro' all eternity ! Be thine, great God !
To purify my soul from mortal stain
Of vice destructive, and prepare my mind
For the fruition of eternal good.

Enter PHAEDO, CEBES, and other friends.

S O C R A T E S.

Phaedo, thou'rt welcome---welcome all my friends !
But why that melancholy gloom ? has aught
Unhing'd our country's peace ? or do ye grieve
For my departure to a place where joys
Shall ever reign ; and where, so wills the God,

We soon shall meet again ? and thence look down
 From skies serene, on this tumultuous world,
 That rolls like wind-swoln seas, which cannot rest.

PHÆDO.

O Socrates ! thou worthiest of the Greeks,
 Howe'er renown'd in the historic page
 For wisdom's lore ! thy friends have cause to mourn
 For thy departure from a world which wants
 Thy aid the more, the more it is disturb'd
 By vice and faction. Oft' hast thou alone
 With steady mind, firm and intrepid stood
 Against a multitude, when tyrants rul'd
 With arbitrary sway, tore up the bounds
 Of right and wrong, and with despotic heel
 On virtue trampled.

SOCRATES.

He who justice deals,
 With vengeance will repay the deeds of violence
 Done here on earth. O ! let me moralize,
 Whilst yet this vocal organ is in tune
 To speak the serious dictates of my soul.
 Man is a compound being, partly made
 Of fine material mould ; and partly form'd
 Of intellectual powers, which animate
 And move the frame, as force of will directs,
 Or reason rules ; two faculties, which flow
 From the same soul ; one in the quest of good,
 And one of choice : and yet the will, misled

By sense and appetite which close adhere
To the material system, oft' commands
What reason oft' forbids : hence are two ways
Laid open to your choice : here reason leads
Where virtue sits sublime, ready to point
To true beatitude ; there vagrant will
Draws you a mazy round in quest of joys
Which fade away, and vanish in the act
Of first fruition : if then death dissolves
The compound system, if the thinking part
Shall dissipate in air, when the embrace
Of body's o'er ; vice would forget its form,
And vanish with the soul, absorb'd and lost
In the wide womb of nothing : but, as soul,
That principle divine ; of earth-made man
The immaterial spirit, does partake
Of pure immortal essence, and subsists
To all eternity ; it must depend
On moral virtue, as the only ground
Of future happiness : for, when the soul
Has from its prison 'scaped, nothing remains
But vice or virtue, the determin'd seeds
Of happiness or misery, just doom
Denounc'd by God's infallible decree
To voluntary agents, fitly form'd
To keep or violate their Maker's laws
As passions rule, or reason holds the reins !

CEBES.

If this be true, they who pursue a life
Of virtue here, must, when they die, ascend
Empyrean heaven, there to enjoy a state
Unknown to change : but some have warmly argued,
That when the body dies, the soul like air
Flies off unseen and lost, insensible
Of pain or pleasure, which can only cleave
To what is animate.

SOCRATES.

Let us, my friend,

Deliberate on nature's laws, and see
What things can suffer change, and what endure
The length of ages and the force of fate.
Know then that compounds, from whatever kind
They draw their being, are by nature fit
For dissolution, ever in a flux,
And soon surrender their specific forms
To be no more ; but what is simple found
Which we call essence, never suffers change
By time and place, but still remains the same
Compleat and self-subsisting thing, unknown
To alteration : things of the first kind
Are open to the view, and lie expos'd
To every sense ; but essence can be seen
Only by reason's eye, when the soul soars
Beyond the verge of sense, to take a view
Of the ideal world, and penetrate

The things that never vanish, but from sight
 Of mortal eye : hence then we may suppose
 Two sorts of beings ; visible the one,
 And one invisible ; this still the same,
 Whilst that is still in change.

CEBES.

So far, my friend,

You reason right.

SOCRATES.

Is there aught else in man,
 Save soul and body ? do not these compose
 The total system ? can the soul be seen
 By keenest eye ? tho' body be discern'd
 In its whole bulk ? say, is not this the state
 Of human frame ? is not the body then
 Conform to things that suffer change, and feel
 A final dissolution, while the soul,
 Pure, immaterial, and from mixture free,
 Eludes the stroke, and flies the falling frame
 That mingles with the mould, to which it ow'd
 Its compound being ?

CEBES.

Now I take you right,
 And yield a free assent : the one resigns
 What plastic nature gave it, and dissolves
 Into its principles ; the other holds
 Its self-subsisting form, devoid of parts
 That suffer change.

SOCRATES.

Then were the soul enslav'd
To the corporeal senses, when employ'd
In elevated thoughts; would it not turn
From the pure view of truth, and mix with things
Unstable known, as veering as the wind
That knows no settled point? but when the soul
Looks inward on itself, and views the train
Of fair ideas, which the intellect
Digests in method right, and makes them fit
For reason's use, it turns to what is pure
And sempiternal found, unknown to change
Of form or order, and to which it bears
A near relation: there the thinking soul
Allured by kindred ties, as thought and truth
Are daughters of the Deity, oft' feasts
On intellectual sweets from the gross sense
Of body free, and therefore far remov'd
From error's darkling shade, which like a cloud
O'ercasts the beam of reason, and obstructs
The splendid flow of light which ever streams
From heavenly wisdom; don't you therefore find
The active soul, when from communion free
With the corporeal senses, firm adheres
To what is simply best?

CEBES.

It must be so;
In such a situation it conforms

To what is simple, right, unchangeable,
 And self-subsisting; but the body bears
 Similitude to what is still in flux,
 As objects vary, and the senses lead
 To what right reason never would assent.

SOCRATES.

But as the system of the human frame
 Is so contriv'd, that soul and body hold
 A mutual commerce while they live on earth
 In social union; does not nature teach
 That the corporeal part, which owes its mass
 To inert matter, should submit to laws,
 And move as reason guides? and, that the soul,
 Of origin divine, should still exert
 Its just dominion?

CEBES.

Doubtless, it should claim
 Superior rule; and therefore they who judge
 With true and philosophic minds, should fly
 From the gross body, and pursue the train
 Of pure ideas opening to the view
 Of reason's eye, when left serenely bright,
 To take a prospect of the pleasing scene.

SOCRATES.

Cebes, you argue right---the soul disturb'd
 By sense and passion, which inherent cleave
 To the corporeal frame, does often drop
 A lucid thought, and visionary catch

Shade unsubstantial. Let us now review
 The steps we have pursued, and we shall see
 To what fixt point our former reas'ning clue
 Conducts our search--The soul, consider'd right
 In sense abstracted, shews itself divine,
 Intelligent, self-moving, free from parts
 And dissolution, immaterial, free,
 And void of passions, simple, self-secure
 From what might check the intellectual powers
 From close pursuit of truth: the other part
 Of the compounded system, is a mass
 Of breathing matter, multiform, depriv'd
 Of all intelligence, by nature fram'd
 For dissolution, ever in a flux,
 Uncertain as the breeze that fans the air,
 Subject to weakness and disease, th' effect
 Of jarring atoms: here, now there inclin'd,
 As passions force, or varied objects move.
 Do not these complicated things consist
 With the eternal laws, by which the God
 Who made the soul and body, wisely rules
 As well the moral as material world?

CEBES.

It must be so: for the true moral world
 Is of quite different sort from what we call
 The natural; to one, the thinking soul
 Is near allied, and therefore should be rul'd
 By moral laws, adapted and apply'd

To beings, charg'd with intellect, and will
 To judge and chuse : but body is a part
 Of the material world, and must obey
 The laws of dissolution, when the soul
 Springs forth to moral joy---Say, my good friend,
 Do I pursue the line of your discourse ?

S O C R A T E S.

You take me right---when then a man resigns
 His living breath, nothing is visible
 But the corporeal part, to which the soul
 Gave sense and motion ; and when vital springs
 No longer operate, nothing can remain
 But lifeless matter, obvious to the sense
 Of sight and touch, which soon, if not embalm'd,
 Must melt away, and mingle with the mould
 Which gave it being : but the soul, secure
 From force of fate, soars to a place unseen
 By mortal eye, and when it has shook off
 The sluggish load, with which it commerce held,
 Small and infrequent as the cogent laws
 Of vital union claim, but firmly stood
 Collected in itself ; as far remov'd
 As possible from sense, intensely bent
 On speculations high, which fill the mind
 With sentiments sublime---the happy fruit
 Of true philosophy---does not a soul
 For heaven thus calculated, claim a right
 To what it is most like, the living God,

Immortal, and supreme, from whom it drew
 Its wond'rous essence? thither when the soul
 Releas'd from sense and appetites, which cleave
 To the material system, wings its way
 By native impulse rais'd, it lives like gods
 In calm repose, where truth in splendor gay
 Shines forth with beams divine, and fills the soul
 With intellectual joy; no darkling shade
 To interrupt the view, but things are seen
 Conspicuous as the light: for there the God
 Whose emanations fill the universe,
 Is all in all, who ever was, and is,
 And shall for ever be the same, incapable
 Of alteration.

CEBES.

Doubtless what is pure
 Should mix with pure, and both confed'rate join,
 Like light and heat, which issue from the same
 Unvaried source.

SOCRATES.

But when a soul unpurg'd
 Of earthly vice, resigns the wretched frame,
 To which it close adher'd with fond embrace
 As thither lur'd by magic spell, to feast
 On sensual joys, to which it was so prone
 That nought seem'd good, or true, but what arose
 From some corporeal sense; something which pleas'd
 Or sight, or taste, or touch, organs prepar'd

By the wise Maker, only to supply
The wants of nature, while the complex state
Its union holds ; nor could be brought to think
That aught invisible to human eye
Has real being, tho' the intellect
When undisturb'd by sense, can clearly view
The moral world, and see the form of things
In simple essence : say, can such a soul
Be fraught with innocence, and taste the sweets
Of intellectual joy, so long inur'd
To sensual pleasure ?

CEBES.

Questionless, a soul
Which with the body a fond commerce holds,
Imbibes corporeal stain, and lies immers'd
In the foul dregs of matter, a vile slave
To brutish appetites, to which it yields
The scepter of its power, and clings to sense,
As if congenite with material mould ;
So deep the taint has sunk into the soul !

PHAEDO.

As human souls thus differ in the choice
Of vice or virtue, yet pursue their ends
By steps unequal ; does no middle state
Lie betwixt happiness, and pains, that spring
From vice as from their seeds ? do all who tread
The different ways that lead where happiness
Or misery is found, partake alike

Of pain or pleasure? for, tho' virtue wear
Appearance different from that of vice,
Yet each his features more or less conform
To the true lines of good and evil, drawn
By reason's pencil, dipt in colours strong
That shew a heaven or depaint a hell.

S O C R A T E S.

Thither I meant, my friends, to lead the thread
Of my discourse, while yet my fault'ring tongue
Performs its office, destin'd by the God
Who fram'd the organ, to declare his works
And speak his praise. Learn then, to know the laws
Of will divine. Pure moral rectitude
Is of the essence of the Deity,
And cannot vary from the laws that rule
Eternal justice, which in a solemn place
Of final doom, where human souls convene,
Led by their daemons, shall the fates of men
Awful pronounce, and to each soul assign
A proper region suited to the kind
Of its past life, since it descended first
From pre-existent state to animate
An earthly substance, by the God inspir'd
With will and reason; reason to direct,
And will to chuse; with sense and appetites,
Which, as employ'd, may either prove the guards
Or bane of virtue. They who lead a life,
Nor always prone to vice, nor full intent

On virtue's charms, must in a certain place
Suffer due pains, proportion'd to their crimes,
In measure just, 'till being cleans'd of guilt
Which soil'd their souls, they meet with a reward
That's justly adequate to moral good
Performed here, from future dread of torture
Ever free : whilst they who've amass'd a load
Of crimes enormous, and atrocious deeds
Of direful nature, which even mercy's hand
Cannot obliterate, are downward hurl'd
To lowest Tartarus, and there consign'd
To ever-during chains---the fit reward
Of foul demeanour. They indeed who led
By a misguided will, the menial slave
To sense and passion, have committed sins
Of a deep dye, but such as penitence
May purge away ; shall for a stated time
Suffer due penance, 'till by humble suit,
Join'd to the workings of a contrite soul,
They merit pardon, from the living God
Freely obtain'd ;---so close does mercy cleave
To justice infinite---the attributes
Of Him who rules supreme-- But, O my friends !
Know for your comfort, here while ye remain,
And in this painful pilgrimage have led
A life of innocence, by reason train'd
To purity of will, and free from stain
Of moral turpitude, which warps the mind

To taste for sensual joys ; such guiltless souls,
 From the dead weight of earthly chains releas'd
 As from a prison, are receiv'd on high
 In blissful regions, where incessant streams
 Empyrean light from his celestial throne
 Who reigns above, and pours forth all the rays
 Of goodness beyond thought, much less can words
 Express ideas, too enlarg'd to lie
 Within the compass of created souls. [Exeunt.

SOCRATES retires.

CHORUS.

THE MORAL OECONOMY.

As in the system of the world we find
 Parts of a lower and a higher kind ;
 And each as in due order plac'd,
 Is with peculiar beauty grac'd :
 So does the soul superior claim
 A right to rule the human frame,
 Whilst lower powers in obsequious train
 Exert their menial aid, and reason's laws maintain :

For passions, in a truly moral state
 On will, by reason guided, ever wait ;
 Serve lawless motions to controul,
 And are the guardians of the soul,
 Which by their aid, with bold essay
 To heights of virtue speeds her way ;

From fordid earth uprais'd with effort flies,
And claims a moral kindred to her native skies.

How delicately made is nature's chain,
Where all things mutual lend, and mutual gain ;
The will a middle state maintains ;
Here reason rules, there passion reigns
To execute the will's commands,
While at the helm sage reason stands
To see that all things thither fairly tend,
Where God directs the way, and nature points the end.

Will then and reason are in kind the same,
And stand distinguish'd only in the name ;
For choice, where reason fails, is blind,
But, with it, of the moral kind ;
For then both will and reason draw
Eternal truths from nature's law ;
While moving passions are the active springs
Which give the soul to rise on reason's soaring wings.

A C T V. S C E N E I.

S O C R A T E S solus.

* O MAY a friendly gale at Heav'n's command
 Soon hither waft the destin'd ship that bears
 The signal for my death ! how slowly seem
 The hours to glide, which carry on their wings
 Our fondest hopes ! my mind is full prepar'd
 For speedy death.

Enter CRITO and other friends.

S O C R A T E S.

Welcome, my friends ! sit down
 As seems ye best---the hurricane has ceas'd,

* Socrates happened to be condemned the very day the priest of Apollo crowned the poop of the sacred ship which sailed with an offering into the island of Delos.

The reader must observe, that this ship went annually in commemoration of the mighty deliverance of Theseus in Crete, and in consequence of his vow. It was a rule of their religion, never to be broken through, that from the time of the departure of this ship from the port of Athens to the time of its coming back, no malefactors were ever put to death: this sometimes, by means of contrary winds, occasioned the intervention of a considerable space, as happened in the case of Socrates, who was in prison thirty days before his death, during which time his disciples attended him with uncommon assiduity.

Plato in Phaed.—Plut. de invidia et odio.

And all is calm---this is the happy day
Which gives me notice of my change; let joy
Serene appear in ev'ry smiling face,
And bid it welcome: what the president
Whilom denounc'd, shot like a ray of light
Darted from heaven, and gave my soul to feel
Joys which I can't express---What! does pale grief
Sit furrow'd on your brows, as if chill fear
Thrill'd thro' the veins? does this, my friends, beseech
A festal day? a day, which fair shall shine
In future fame? are ye aghast to find
Your friend shall soon be happy, and resume
His pristine state? for shame, my brethren!
Let nobler thoughts inspire your heav'n-born souls,
And give them sentiments which suit the port
Of immaterial beings made to live
A short time here---Father of gods and men!
Be thine the pious care to raise my soul
Above the fear of death, which can destroy
That part alone, which plastic nature form'd
Under the conduct of thy guiding hand.

CRITO.

O Socrates! can we unmov'd behold
That venerable body gall'd with chains
Which none but knaves should feel? thy hoary head
Doom'd to a prison, where the genial ray
Abhors to enter? and thy sons expos'd
To the bare world? or destin'd to depend

On the kind friendly hand, which takes delight
 In doing good ? have we not reason then
 To mourn the loss of thee who stood unmov'd
 In virtue's cause ? ---but means for thy escape
 May yet be found.---

SOCRATES.

Unless I violate
 The civil laws, and fly from what they deem
 An act of justice, I must here resign
 This aged body to the punishment
 My judges doom'd ; but the ethereal part
 Of essence pure, that principle divine
 Which constitutes the man, can never feel
 The fatal blow : for, when this body blends
 With parent earth, the soul sublime shall soar
 Thro' fields of aether bright, to meet the God
 Who gave it being, and shall make it shine
 Thro' all eternity in realms of light.
 Thanks to the judges ! tho' without design,
 They have consign'd me to a life of joy ;
 Which flows unfailing from a source divine,
 Sole fountain pure of pleasure and delight !

CRITO.

Had'st thou, O Socrates, in humble suit
 Address'd the judges, and chose aught, beside
 The Prytaneum, for thy punishment ;
 They never would have sentenc'd thee to death :
 But to demand reward, (tho' it became

The merit of thy cause). stunn'd like a clap
Of unexpected thunder, when the sky
Is free from clouds.

S O C R A T E S.

Had I, in humble guise,
With abject mind, and supplication mean,
Implor'd their mercy; thus perhaps I might
Have fav'd a life, but at the dear expence
Of all that honour, which a man long train'd
In philosophic lore, might justly claim
From a free people. On this principle
Firm I rely, that nothing beside guilt
Can be an evil, and do therefore chuse
Rather to be depriv'd of some few years
I might have liv'd, than in an instant lose,
By grov'ling means, the glory I had gain'd
In my past life: and as the present age
Seems not to know my worth, I hence appeal
To late posterity, assur'd to meet
With more regard in all succeeding times,
When prejudice and envy die away.

C R I T O.

Good night, my friend---some business calls me forth
Ere yet I go to rest; to-morrow's dawn
Shall bring me hither, when I hope to find
Thy ear dispos'd to listen to advice.

[Exit.

S O C R A T E S.

Now, I am quite at ease---Crito no more

Will think of my escape---how some men judge
Of what is right or wrong ! To leave this place
Without an order from the civil powers,
Is to rebel against the laws that rule
This honour'd state, which could not long subsist,
Did ev'ry member claim a right to void
Its firm decrees---But now the car of night
Rolls in deep shade, and warns me to address
My wonted vespers to the God who rules
The sweet vicissitude of night and day---
Hail, universal Lord ! at whose command
The sun withdraws his ray, and darkling dips
To néther world ! anon, the starry train
Of heav'n succeeds, nor varies from the course
By thee ordain'd : thine is the dewy shade
Which veils the night, and thine the pearly drops
That dress the morn ! all nature is at once
Thy care and offspring ! be it thine to guard
The firmness of my soul, and keep it free
From foul transgression and corporeal stain !

CHORUS.

Thy praise, O Socrates, the moral bards,
High in fame for sacred song,
To future ages shall transmit,
As time's current rolls along.
Future ages free from envy
Shall thy leading steps pursue ;

Shall attend to reason's lore,
And hold thy virtue in distinguish'd view.

To thee, Minerva's shrine shall honour pay ;
To thee, Apollo tune his lyre :
From thee shall future sages feel
The sacred warmth of heav'nly fire.
By thee the patriot train'd to laws
Which ought to rule a civil state,
Shall find his schemes successful prove,
And by his virtues make his country great.

Fir'd by thy courage, shall the warrior pour
His banner'd legions o'er the plain ;
Fixt as the laws of fate to fall
With honour, or a conquest gain :
Virtue when harass'd with distress
From thee shall consolation find ;
Look with disdain on things below,
And give the soul a taste for pleasures more refin'd.

S C E N E II.

Ethereal SPIRITS descend and sing while SOCRATES
sleeps.

Ease, delight of human kind !
Soft enchantress of the mind !

Sweet the warbling wood-lark's song,
 When he chants the trees among !
 But without thee his sweetest strain
 Instead of pleasure gives a pain.
 Sweet is the dewy-spangled mead,
 The level lawn or winding glade !
 Sweet is the cadence of the limpid rill
 When gently trickling down the smooth reclining hill !

But nor rill nor lawn can please
 When the mind is not at ease,
 Ease, thou happy gift of heaven,
 By the gods to mortals given !
 Thou, to fair virtue near ally'd,
 Art ever by her sacred side !
 Whether she chuse the rugged way,
 Or thro' the moss-grown valley stray ;
 You, sooth'd with raptur'd fancy, walk along,
 And lend attentive ear to her celestial song.

Ease the lyric bard inspires,
 Warms his breast with heavenly fires ;
 Bids him swell a fuller key,
 Or a softer sound convey.
 'Tis ease alone gives peaceful rest
 To the pure virtue-breathing breast ;
 'Tis ease that calms the ruffled soul,
 'Tis ease can passion's force controul :

Virtue and ease for ever social join ;
Both of congenial form, and both of birth divine !

See the softly-sleeping sage,
Silver'd o'er with hoary age !
See his visage calm and clear,
Such as smiling infants wear,
When at some pleasing glittering toy,
Their little hearts exult with joy.
Happiest of mortals ! soon shall we
Thy unembodied spirit see ;

When in high heaven it tunes the golden lyre,
And joins in symphony with the celestial choir.

[On CRITO's coming in, SOCRATES awakes.]

SOCRATES.

Thy visitation, Crito, seems to bear
Some hasty message, say, how wears the time ?
Is it yet day ?

CRITO.

The first fresh dawn of light
Opens the morn, and bids Aurora rise
To wake the sun. Just as I enter'd here
Methought I heard a softly, warbling voice,
That tun'd melodious numbers ; near at first
It seem'd, then by slow sinking dy'd away
In distant sounds.

SOCRATES.

O Crito ! such a night

I never spent 'till now : in easy flow
 The circling blood held on a gentle course
 Thro' all my veins : my head serene and clear
 As the still air, when scarce a breeze is found
 To wave its wings : the spirits which exhale
 From the pure purple flood, in wanton play
 Danc'd round my heart ; and the respiring lungs
 Breath'd with uncommon ease : methought I heard
 Voices that tun'd harmonious airs, more soft
 Than Orpheus' song, which made the savage race
 Forget their rage. Praise to the God supreme
 Who reigns above, still present to our wants
 Whether we wake or sleep ! for, what you've heard
 Was doubtless sent by him, to cheer my soul
 With minstrelsy divine. But, Crito, say,
 What so soon brought thee to the dismal goal
 Of thy old friend ? is the ship yet arriv'd
 Which sail'd to Delos, and at whose return
 I leave this world to hasten to the host
 Of heav'n's inhabitants, and taste the sweets
 Of love and joy, which the soul cannot feel
 While here embodied ?

C R I T O .

There is sure advice
 From Sunium brought, that with to-morrow's sun
 The fatal vessel comes---therefore in haste
 I hither sped to tell thee, that the doors
 Are open to thy flight, the goaler gain'd,

And all things ready for a sure escape
 From ruthless prison, and the dread of death.
 Haste, and let us leave ungrateful Athens,
 Ere the dim morning brighten into day.

S O C R A T E S.

Is there a place beyond the bounds which hold
 This Attica, where death has no access
 To mortal man? had I not better here
 Resign my life? here, where the state decreed
 That I should end my days? does it consist
 With honour's laws, that like a miscreant
 Touch'd with the sense of guilt, I thus should fly
 Thro' fear of death? such practice ill becomes
 The principles I taught.

C R I T O.

Perhaps you think
 That your escape would hurt your friends who hold
 Your doom unjust; perchance expose their lives
 To civil rage---but, what can be more dear
 To an ingenuous mind, than to preserve
 The life of Socrates, on which depends
 The good of thousands? even strangers come
 From distant parts to purchase thy release
 On lavish terms, with promise to supply
 Thy future wants, and make thee finish life
 In peaceful ease: or, should'st thou think that scheme
 Too insecure; I have in Thessaly
 A sweet retreat, where you may freely live

Remote from danger, and in safe repose
Plant in your children's minds the living seeds
Of sacred truth : there may Xantippe close
Thy beamless eyes, when nature stops the springs
Of borrow'd motion, and thy soul takes flight
On upward pinions to the throne of heaven.

S O C R A T E S.

Had I, thro' curiosity, been led
To see this seat of science, unattach'd
To the Athenian laws, and here arraign'd
For crimes I know not, I should think my life
Might be preserv'd by ministerial means
Of any kind, which would not lay the rules
Of moral virtue waste : but, as I here
Was usher'd into life, and deeply drank
Of the soul-cheering stream which limpid flows
From scientific spring ; as here I spent
My riper years, obedient to the laws
Of the Athenian state, which spread its wings
To guard my civil rights ; as more than once
With due solemnity I pledg'd my faith, to hold
The laws of justice sacred, and renounce
All private views : how can I now unhinge
Such strong engagements, made by free consent,
And voluntary choice ?

C R I T O.

O Socrates !

“ country has condemn'd thee to a death

That wears the cloud of guilt, which to thy soul
Was ever odious known---Can justice here
Plead in her favour? can she hold the scales
Of right and wrong with an unequal hand,
And weigh the fates of men, as will inclines
To save or to destroy? Can she absolve
The hand profane for shedding guiltless blood,
Which cries aloud for vengeance from the gods
On a curs'd nation?

SOCRATES.

Crito, too much zeal

In friendship's cause, has made you pass the bounds
Of virtue's law, which bid you not return
Evil for evil; nor requite offence
By the like usage; nor repair a wrong
By foul misdeeds. Should he who gave thy frame
Its vital feeds, or she who with fond care
Nurtur'd thy helpless youth, and train'd thy tongue
To lisping prattle, should they discourteous prove
And treat thee hardly, would'st thou therefore drop
Filial obedience, and forget the son
To be reveng'd on those who gave thee birth?
And know'st thou not, thy country claims a right
To more regard than they from whom you drew
The crimson blood which circles in your veins?
You know, my Crito, I have ever taught,
That acts of justice in a civil state
Are its defence and bulwark, the firm base

On which it stands : say then, I am to die
 In virtue's cause, and fall a sacrifice
 To warmth of rage ; do they who take my life,
 Suffer, or I ? The spotless soul secure
 From shock of death, smiles at the pointed dart,
 And bids it strike---Let then Melitus fear,
 And they who judg'd me---there grim horror claims
 A right to rage : O may they find a way
 To make their peace with God : I here resign
 My sentenc'd life a victim to his will.

CRITO.

I wish my care had met with more regard.

[Exit CRITO. And SOCRATES retires.

CHORUS.

Death, when view'd by guilty eyes,
 Must in dreadful form appear ;
 But to the good and virtuous mind
 Death can nought but pleasure wear :

There the soul in separate life
 When divorc'd from wedded clay,
 Has nothing to employ it's thoughts,
 But dreary mansions void of day :

Here the soul from earth escap'd
 Ranges thro' joyous realms of light ;
 With wonder views the rolling orbs,
 All heaven unfolding to its sight :

There shalt thou quickly wear the crown,
 Where virtue's gems for ever glow,
 Excursive soar, and thence look down
 With pity on the world below.

S C E N E III.

S O C R A T E S solus.

Now all within is calm---when this bright sun,
 Shall dip in western wave its glowing wheels,
 From earth shall Socrates with joy ascend
 Into the regions of eternal light
 Where God presides, the origin and end
 Of heav'n-born souls ! there I shall joyous meet
 With * Palamedes, upright man, betray'd

* Palamedes the son of Nauplius king of Euboea, when the Grecian kings were to go to the war of Troy. Ulysses (son of Laertes) to save himself at home, feigned himself mad. Palamedes found out the counterfeit, by laying his son in the furrow, as he was ploughing, and sowing salt—— he stopt the plough, and saved the boy, whereupon his counterfeiting was discovered, and he was taken to the war against his will, and being sent into Thrace to forage for corn, he returned, and said he could find none—Palamedes went himself, and returned with large quantities from thence. Ulysses, to revenge these things, counterfeited a letter in Priamus's name, wherein he thanked Palamedes for his intended treason, and mentioned that he had sent him gold for a reward: now Ulysses had secretly conveyed gold into his tent: these letters were found and read in the camp. Palamedes was called; Ulysses seemed to

By old Laertes' son : there † *Acacus*,
And † *Rhadamanthus* and *Triptolemus*,

defend him, and said no trust was to be given to the letters of enemies; but, said he, let some men be sent into *Palamedes's* tent, and then if there be found any sum of gold, that he was surely guilty—They sent and found the gold, and *Palamedes* was condemned and stoned—His death was afterwards revenged by *Nauplius*. In the time of the Trojan war he invented four Greek letters, α, ξ, χ, ϕ , adding them to the sixteen which had been before invented by *Cadmus*. He was skilful in astrology, and the first who found out the cause of eclipses, and brought the year to the course of the sun, and the month to the course of the moon—He invented several methods of ordering an army, and the giving the watch word, which, together with those letters, they said, he learned by the conduct and flying of cranes—whence by the poets they are called *Palamedis aves*—the birds of *Palamedes*. Mart.

† *Acacus* was the son of *Jupiter* by *Aegina*; he and *Rhadamanthus* were only inferior judges, the first of whom examined the Europeans, the latter the Asiatics, and bore only plain rods as a mark of their office; but all difficult cases were referred to *Minos*, who sat over them with a scepter of gold—Their court was held in a large meadow called the field of truth. *Plato* and *Tully* add *Triptolemus* to these as a fourth judge—he was the son of *Celeus* of Athens; *Ceres* lent him her chariot, and sent him through the world to instruct mankind in the benefits of tillage.

‡ *Rhadamanthus* was son of *Jupiter* and *Europa*, a great legislator, and brother to *Minos*—who having killed his brother, fled to *Aechalia* in *Boeotia*, where he married *Alcmena*, the widow of *Amphytrion*: his province in the infernal regions was to judge such as died impenitent.

Renown'd of old, heroes and demigods,
 Sanctities of heav'n, that kept their souls
 Unstain'd by vice, and all who held in view
 The public good, his praise shall celebrate
 In chaunt symphonious, whose creative hand
 Made heav'n and earth, and the stupendous whole
 In all its vast variety of change
 In stated order rules: there * Linus, born
 Of fair Terpsichore, and who first taught
 Threïcian Orpheus to high-string his lyre
 To artful melody; there he who sung
 The race of gods, and taught the rural plains
 To yield their fruit; there blind Maconides,
 So fam'd for epic song, and all the bards
 Who sung of virtue, in full concert join'd
 Shall strike the silver cymbals tun'd to notes
 Of harmony divine, and heav'n's bright court
 Shall ring with joy: such is the symphony
 Of souls above---But! Crito comes
 Who *would* act right, but oft mistakes the means.

Enter CRITO, and several friends.

CRITO.

O Socrates! thy faithful friends in crowds

* Linus was son of Apollo, whom he had by the nymph Terpsichore; he was born at Thebes, and eminent for learning—he wrote on the origin of the world, the courses of the sun and moon, and the production of animals—but of these not the least fragments remain.

Do hither flock, and press to know thy will
Concerning thy affairs, that they may learn
What best befits thy family, and suits
Thy tender offspring.

· S O C R A T E S.

I have nothing new
To leave in charge---pursue the moral schemes
I always taught ; if ye neglect yourselves
You will not think of me, nor of the friends
I leave behind me ; still let your faithful
Memories be stor'd with all those lectures,
All those moral rules, which for your guidance
Chiefly I have plan'd ; with unabated vigour,
Truth's sacred steps pursue, where'er she leads
Her safe-directing way ; altho' th' event
May unsuccessful prove ; let justice rule
In all your actions : be the republic
Your guardian care ; let love and friendship's bonds
Unite you all, and let no wild misrule
Bear down virtue, for without virtue's aid,
No state can long subsist : Xantippe's friends,
With her own industry and care, will feed
The wants of nature ; very small supplies
Are found sufficient ; what is more, must tend
To slothful luxury. Give it in charge
To my dear children, to pursue the steps
Their father trod ; and train their youthful minds
To sentiments of truth, as ye would sow

Seed in a field, ere multitude of weeds
Renders it waste : and should they fall like me
In virtue's cause, we soon shall meet above,
Where God's unerring justice holds the scales,
By which the merit of the cause is weigh'd---
This counsel I bequeath---be it your care
To see the purport of my will obey'd.

C R I T O.

But say, my friend, how would you be interr'd,
When death shall lay that honour'd body low ?

S O C R A T E S.

Just as you please, do with it as you will---
Corruption claims that part of Socrates,
This carcase is its prey---but t'other part
Came down from heav'n, and thither shall return
To live with spirits of congenial form---
O ! be it then your care to keep your souls
Immaculate and pure, an offering meet
For Him who form'd them, when his wisdom deigns
To summon them to render an account
Of what they did on earth while here confin'd
To perishable frames, too apt to draw
The soul aside, and lead it into vice !

S C E N E IV.

Enter a MESSENGER from PLATO.

MESSENGER.

To thee, O Socrates, does Plato make
A tender of his heart---uncommon pains
Have seiz'd his limbs, and render him unfit
To pay his duty here, else would he spend
His hours with thee, while yet thou dost subsist,
Tho' in a prison; and with gladness hear
Thy wisdom-flowing tongue, which oft' has charm'd.
His list'ning ear, and warm'd his glowing breast
With soul-enraptur'd fire: his grateful heart
O'erflows with thanks for thy benevolence
And friendly care, which gave a happy turn
To his young mind, and rais'd his grov'ling soul
From sordid earth, to dignity and worth.

SOCRATES.

Plato is worthy of my tenderest wish
And high regard: O may the God I serve
Give him to live, till he has run his course
Of virtue here! his tow'ring genius soars
Like eagles on the wing, when toward heaven
They rise in rapid flight, and view the sun
In his meridian blaze: Plato has drank
Deep at my spring, and knows the moral source
From whence it flows: to him and Xenophon

I pour'd out all my soul, and found a foil
 Fit to receive the seeds I meant to sow
 In generous minds, by nature form'd to taste
 Propriety and order : for I chose
 The tablets of the heart whereon to stamp
 My living precepts, rather than to use
 The skins of beasts---should my lov'd Plato write
 Aught of his Socrates ; his candid pen
 Will fair describe the master and the friend---
 * O Xenophon ! thy fate has call'd thee forth
 To noble deeds of arms ; at thy return
 Athens shall shine in fair historic page ;
 Nor thy old Socrates be left unprais'd.
 O ! may they live in peace ! may ministers
 Of light attend them thro' the dreary vale
 Of this dark world ; 'till we shall meet above ;
 Never to part again ! there shall our souls
 From bond of body free, range uncontroul'd
 Thro' pure ethereal space, and thence survey
 With true delight all sublunary things.

* Xenophon was about that time conducting that memorable retreat of the ten thousand Greeks from the remotest part of Persia into their own country---which retreat of six hundred and twenty leagues, was made in one hundred and twenty-two days marches, and in the space of eight months, of which the whole honour is almost due to himself, as well in regard to the advice and good conduct, as in relation to the command of the enterprize.

MESSENGER.

Thou honour'd sage, adieu !

SOCRATES.

Adieu, good man !

Health to my Plato---Bid him bear in mind
Our moral converse, and pursue the path
Which leads where truth and probity preside;
Bid him not mourn for me---I wait with joy
The coming hour!---O ! may this happy day
For ever shine in the records of fame,
And shew the merits of my blameless life !

MESSENGER.

With faithful care I will relate to Plato
The purport of thy words---once more adieu. [Exit.

SOCRATES.

O Crito ! O my friends ! tell Xenophon,
I gladly would have seen him ere the power
Of speech was lost---he fairly trac'd my soul
By all its reas'ning clues, and hope he holds
My moral precepts fully in his view,
To guide his conduct thro' this vale of woe.

CRITO.

Thy orders, Socrates, shall be obey'd ;
And he shall be acquainted with the whole,
From thy appearance in the court, 'till death
Shall close those eyes.

SOCRATES.

I hope he'll hear thy tale

Without concern, save what our friendship claims,
The goodly offspring of united minds.

S C E N E V,

Enter GOALER.

GOALER.

This is the destin'd hour, when you must take
The fatal cup.

SOCRATES.

Pray what is to be done

When I have ta'en the draught ? for I would choose
To die as I'm directed.

GOALER.

Walk about

'Till you begin to find your falling legs
Grow weary of their load, then lie supine
Upon your bed, to give the liquor leave
To check the blood, and operate with force.

SOCRATES.

Come, give it me :---that welcome precious cup,
That cordial to the soul of Socrates,
That sweet release from anxious care and toil,
I joyous hold ; by this shall I ascend
The habitations of the just, beyond
The reach of malice---I already soar---
Already see---(what beam divine is this !)
The mansions open, where the blest shall reign

In robes of glory---Friend, say, can I spare
As much of this kind potion as would make
A small libation.

GOALER.

I prepar'd the dose
Just of sufficient force to make thy end
As easy as I could.

SOCRATES.

I thank thee, friend---

Thy visitations since I hither came
Have been humane and kind---tho' nought, thou say'st,
Can from this cup be spar'd ; yet I may pour
My prayers forth to the great God, who rules
In heaven and earth supreme, that he may make
My exit from this world, and the last stage
Of life as easy as his wisdom deems
Most proper for me---

*[Here Socrates stands silent for a short time,
and then drinks the cup with amazing tran-
quillity.]*

---Be thy blessed will

For ever mine ! Parent of heaven and earth,
And all the breathing forms that live in Thee,
To Thee I render back what cannot die !
From Thee it came, and does to Thee return,
In hope of kind acceptance from the God
Who gave it pow'r to think ! O may he guard
The offspring of his goodness, rais'd to do

His will on earth, and crown it with reward
 Where reigns beatitude without alloy!---
 Now must I walk about---a little time
 Will set me free from earth---

*[When he had drunk the draught he looked
 about and saw his friends weeping.]*

Ah! where my friends,
 Is now your virtue's wonted strength? for this
 I sent away the women, lest *their* eyes
 Should flow with tears of weakness; I have taught
 That men should die in peace, and bless the gods
 For their departure hence, who have prepar'd
 A better life for all who firmly tread
 The paths of virtue, and pursue the way
 That leads to heav'n---O! may my demeanour,
 My steady-practicè in this awful hour,
 This hour, that verges on eternity,
 Be such as Socrates himself would praise!--
 Shall this divorce my weary soul from earth---
 Transcendent drug---this trivial simple draught---
 This trampled weed consign me to the stars!
 ---So bountiful is nature---Cease to weep---
 My countrymen, my friends---rather rejoice,
 Rejoice with Socrates---his triumph share---
 No shade of doubt remains, 'tis day-light all---
 'Tis heaven itself unfolds---O wider yet
 Unfold that glorious gate, the courts of light---
 I see, I see---no mortal tongue can utter---

I spring, I soar, I mingle with the blest---

[He grows faint.]

And yet---but friendship comes from heav'n, farewell.

Nature foregoes her gripe---I feel---I feel

Her slacken'd hand---thou potent, friendly draught---

My soul is half enlarg'd---embrace me---help me---

Hold, hold me up---ye winged ministers---

To Thee, thou God supreme---to Thee I give---

Thou source of life---but O my soul is thine---

Take back this portion of thyself---take back---

Let Socrates be thine---for ever---

[Expires.]

Crito.

I'll do the last kind office to my friend,

I'll close his eyes that set in shades of night,

And see his funeral obsequies perform'd,---

[Exeunt omnes.]

CHORUS of etherial SPIRITS.

Hail, Innocence, thou heav'n-born maid !

Before thee walks a virgin train,

In virtue's fairest robes array'd,

White as the milky way unknown to soil or stain.

Behind, Content with smiling face,

Fair meek-ey'd nymph, holds on her way,

Pursues thee with an even pace,

And from thy cheering path does never devious stray.

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